A MODEL FOR THE USE OF FILM IN A MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS

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PROBLEM

The revolution in technology has increased mankind's ability to communicate and altered its perceptions. The Christian church seeks to speak relevantly and distinctly in this new electronic environment to the people whose eyes and ears are attuned to a vast variety of media. This dissertation assumes that the church can communicate in the "new" world if it is led by strong professionals equipped to assume a role in understanding and utilizing all available media channels. The paper explores the role of the professional minister from a function-centered perspective and asks whether communicating can be seen as a function of ministry and integral to the ministerial role. After developing a model for understanding ministry it focuses upon the motion picture and its place in the acts of ministry.

METHODOLOGY

The problem is explored through a review and analysis of literature on the practice of ministry, the study of communications, and the nature of the film medium.

In the first section the practice of ministry is explored from a historical and a contemporary perspective and the models developed by Seward Hiltner and Allen Moore are presented. From these models, one aspect--ministry as communicating--is highlighted and the process of communications is examined from the point of view of the social sciences, theology and the function of the practicing minister.

Secondly, the model is tested by exploring the way film can be seen as one option for communicating the gospel and performing a ministry of communications.

CONCLUSIONS

Ministry can be seen in a dynamic and wholistic model by looking at its functions or operations. The work of Seward Hiltner and Allen Moore provide such a model. By examining the role of the clergyman from such an angle we can suggest that there are three major groupings of functions; shepherding or pastoral care, communicating, and enabling or administrating. In each grouping or perspective we may see the insights of social sciences and theology interact in the functional activities of the pastor.

If we focus on the perspective of communicating we can see that it is possible to build an understanding of the minister as the facilitator of communications. Such an understanding would provide a way of looking at the role of the minister since it integrates all of his activities.

Such a ministry of communications would involve not only the person to person settings but the larger "mass" settings including the mass media. Film offers a language for communicating with the contemporary world which cannot be ignored.

The church, beginning with its professional leadership, must seek to become involved with the media to understand its language, its economics, and its social impact. Such involvement will result in

the development of a critical stance toward the communications media within the church. To develop such a stance is an important part of a ministry of communications.

INTRODUCTION

Humanity is continually tossed about and buffeted by a tide of societal forces that defy taming. We are adrift " . . . in a cultural wash that sweeps over and about us, molding and shaping us and never leaving us the same."[1]

The forces push and pull upon human relationships and shape the configurations of society. Like a giant teaching machine they captivate and condition mankind.

The process is one of interaction between the human and his environment. Essentially the process, then, is a type of communication, or the sharing of images and information. In that sharing the human learns about his world *and* he shapes his image of himself. William Kuhns speaks of this interface in this way: "All environments are special forms of communication: the world's letting man know who he is by his contact with it."[2]

While many factors can interact to shape an environment-- perhaps the most powerful element for us today is the impact of our man-made technologies. Those of us living in the western world are like fish swimming in an invisible sea created by our machines. Although we do not often recognize the power of our technologies to

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[1]Robert G. Konzelman, *Marquee Ministry* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 2.

[2]William Kuhns, *Environmental Man* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 20.

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shape our perceptions and interactions they still work their power over us.

Perhaps the best known voice pointing to the effect of technology on society has been Marshall McLuhan. This prolific writer and speaker has become noted for his enigmatic "probes" which explore the history of technology's impact on society and the current situation.

For McLuhan, all technologies function as extension of man's physical body enabling him to accomplish tasks in new ways. Each of our devices has replaced one of man's physical talents and upset the balance of senses and abilities, forcing the individual and the society to adjust to the loss of the original organ.

Up to the present man has "amputated" a variety of his physical abilities. Today he has created the electronic media which, according to McLuhan, attacks the central nervous system.

> With the arrival of electric technology, man extended, or set
> outside himself, a model of the central nervous system itself. To
> the degree that this is so, it is a development that suggests a
> desperate and suicidal auto-amputation, as if the central nervous
> system could no longer depend on the physical organs to be pro-
> tective buffers against the slings and arrows of outrageous
> mechanism. It could well be that the various physical organs
> since the inventing of printing have made too violent and super-
> stimulated a social experience for the central nervous system
> to endure.[3]

These extensions are media through which man interacts with his environment. Not only is there content associated with the messages that these media carry--but the media itself by its ability

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[3]Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (New York: New American Library, 1964), p. 53.

to cause readjustments in our societal sensory balances bring their own message. Their impact upon us and upon society is more potent and farther reaching than the content of the media themselves. For McLuhan the media is the message. And we ignore it to our detriment.

The problem is that we normally are not aware of the impact of the technical extensions of our bodies until their power to shape our lives has passed. Thus we become tools manipulated by our own creations. To counter this we must rely upon the special insights of the artists to sense our current situation and help us prepare to cope with changes. "The artist is the man in any field scientific or humanistic, who grasps the implications of his actions and of new knowledge in his own time. He is the man of integral awareness."[4] McLuhan is challenging us to awareness of the water in which we swim.

The products which have extended our abilities include the car, plane and so forth, but they particularly include the devices which enable men to communicate with greater speed and accuracy than ever imagined.

This paper will explore on the impact of the motion picture technology on society's ability to communicate and especially ways in which the church can better understand and utilize the technology. This paper will have some application to television insofar as TV is the most common distributor of filmed material.

The film will be considered because of its vitality and power

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[4]*Ibid.*, p. 71.

as well as its nature as representative of the communications revolution of our day.

> The moving image has been harnessed to the goals of commerce, propaganda, education, exploitation, entertainment, journalism. It is the dominant medium in the communications experience of most people in the developed world. Film and television are the forms of communication most wanted by most people everywhere. It's the age of the moving image.[5]

Filmed communication speaks with a power and impact far greater than the printed or spoken word. Film prints can be reproduced over and over which makes possible the transmission of identical messages to vast audiences. Its impact on our culture has been immense. Today we live on the verge of a world-wide village held together by the common experiences of people everywhere made possible by the film/television technology. Film has opened new possibilities, gulfed chasms of differences and created a new cultural level for mankind. It has been a major contributor to the communications revolution.

The revolution has been carried on the shoulders of the media, the computer, the telephone and so forth. In spite of the great promise of these devices and the disciplines they have created, the questions persist: whether the human race is ready for them? Have we developed the ability to cope with their dislocating impact? Have we developed the talent to utilize them or are we being used by our own inventions?

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[5]John M. Culkin, "Film and the Church," in B. F. Jackson (ed.) *Television-Radio-Film for Churchmen* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), p. 202.

These are significant questions and there are no clear-cut answers. What is certain is that the answers will have a decided impact on the church and the way it shares its message. If the Christian is to understand and communicate with the contemporary world he must begin with the power and influence of the technological revolution that shapes our self-image. Kuhns points to the significance of media for the Christian's theological understanding of the nature of man.

> An important characteristic of the technological environment is that it prods a consciousness of man's relationship to the world about him in a sharper, more intense way than ever before . . . The presence of this consciousness should be the fore-runner of theological attempts to understand its meaning for man today.[6]

For an issue with such potential, the church has done little to prepare or respond to the revolution.

> Theologians, representing the articulated consciousness of Christians, have recognized the eruptive forces of technological change but have done little to explore the significance of these forces for understanding the presence of Christians in today's world.[7]

The Church once proudly stood at the helm of the ship of society guiding it through the rough seas of rapid change. But new realities have long since put it out of its place. "The traditional mediators of information and values have found that they are often responding to situations rather than creating situations."[8]

Those persons operating within the church have been caught unaware and they have to an astonishing degree tried to pretend the

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[6]Kuhns, p. 28.   [7]*Ibid.*, p. 19.

[8]Culkin, p. 202.

revolution isn't happening. Like Sam Goldwyn's advice on the handling of critics these churchmen operate on the maxim, "Don't pay any attention to them; don't even ignore them."[9] The church cannot afford to live in such ignorance of the forces that shape the world. The reasons are manifold and obvious. I suggest three that must be considered.

First, if the church is to speak to contemporary man it must phrase the message in a mode and a language to which present-day people respond. While we have received a message that transcends the limits of time, we also have a mandate to share that word with culturally conditioned people.

It is easy to assume we can manipulate the hearer to accept our style and perspective. Such an assumption defeats the very message we proclaim. We must strive to carefully enunciate the time honored message in a *form and language that the listener understands* and allow the receiver to accept or reject it.

The question becomes one of speaking "relevantly." Although the word is almost trite, there is still need to remember the needs of the society with which we communicate. A number of years ago, Paul Tillich wrote of the concerns of ministers that their function seemed unnecessary in the modern-day. He answered their fears in this way:

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[9] Quoted in *Ibid.,* p. 203.

> The reason for the irrelevance of the Christian ministry in our time is that it has not learned to speak to the people of a largely secularized world *in such a way* that they feel: this message concerns us ultimately; it is a matter of 'to be or not to be' for us.[10]

The quest for relevance never ceases. Today, just as in 1960, we must strive to speak to men and women conditioned by the form and content of messages sent to them by technological devices. These new media are integral to the shaping of all human interchange and their significance must be realized by the witnessing community of faith.

Secondly, the media can create an alluring web that invites man to rest his spiritual question and thereby captures his spirit and drains it of his freedom. By its impact and power the new technologies can numb the discerning nature of mankind and by so doing dehumanize him.

William Fore points to two specific ways the mass media can constrict man's freedom. First it can limit or obscure the flow of information that we need to make human decisions.

> . . . A fundamental requirement of being a Christian today is being *adequately informed*--about oneself, about one's neighbors, about one's total environment. It is at this point that the mass media are most valuable, yet most restrictive.
> By limiting, distorting and obscuring information, the mass media can limit, distort and obscure man's freedom of action. To the extent that the media limit his information, they make a man less than fully man.[11]

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[10]Paul Tillich, "The Relevance of the Ministry in Our Time and Its Theological Foundation," in Hans Hofman (ed.) *Making the Ministry Relevant* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), p. 23.

[11]William F. Fore, *Image and Impact* (New York: Friendship Press, 1970), p. 40.

And on the other hand the commercial urge to keep a large audience results in entertainment at the most common and bland level and then hits that audience with sales pitch after sales pitch. The totality of effect is to undercut the consumer's ability to reason his choices.

> The tendency to blunt reason has a more sinister effect than merely selling things to people that they don't want to buy. It also obscures the individual's recognition that the whole system tends to repress his freedom by limiting his real choices and by invading the inner space where he maintains his own sense of personal identity and integrity.[12]

The danger is that the new media can manipulate and stullify man's reasoning, his freedom, indeed, his self-image if it is not carefully understood and controlled.

Another spokesman for this concern has been Harvey Cox who suggests the media can act as disguised forms of religion offering man viewpoints on where he came from and what his condition is, what are the ideal possibilities and how do we work toward them.[13]

The human being, for Cox, is characterized by "interiority" or spirit. That is the ability to filter and select among the inputs that strike his sense and use the selected inputs to build a personal world of history and meaning.

> An automaton is a machine that lights up instantly to every cue relayed to it from the control board. A human being on the other hand digests, orders, decides, responds--all on the basis of an interchange between his own interior life and the culture. The difference between the robot and the person is interiority.[14]

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[12]*Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

[13]Harvey Cox, *The Seduction of the Spirit* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973).

[14]*Ibid.*, p. 94.

The mass media present to us all a preprocessed view of reality. The viewer need not use his human ability to sort, select and organize the inputs of life into meaningful wholes. The media lure the viewer to accept and affirm its images and values uncritically.

> I call this misuse of faith 'the seduction of the spirit.' Whether it is done by churches or mass media, and whether individuals or groups are seduced, the process is pathetically the same: the seducer twists authentic inner impulses into instruments of domination. Vulnerable persons and powerless peoples are maneuvered into seeing themselves through images thrust upon them by the distorting mirror of the managers.[15]

The man who has been seduced by the media image and values has lost the power to respond and all such communication settings become monologues. As he loses his spirit man ceases to need or to relate to his personal history and he loses his ability to respond to a God who can only be found in dialogue. In this light, Cox says, "I am interested . . . in showing that both in their content and in their technical structure, the mass media today present an unavoidable challenge to the Christian vision of human life."[16]

Both Fore and Cox speak to the ability of new technologies to entrap man and take from him human skills. Whether that process numbs man's ability to reason or seduce his spirit the result is the need for the Christian to be concerned with the power of the media.

In like fashion the media function to limit and destroy man's imagination. As we lose our abilities to individually comprehend reality so we are drained of the ability to imaginatively live. A

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[15]*Ibid.*, p. 118.　　　　[16]*Ibid.*, p. 308.

third reason that the church cannot afford to ignore the new tech-
nologies is that it has a mission to become a place where the imagina-
tion can be restored.

Tom Trotter, speaking of the decline of powers of imagination,
links their recovery to the church and seminary.

> The 'religion and the arts' movement today has as its reason
> for being the *recovery of imagination in the context of the com-
> munity of faith,* the restoration of *the arts as significant
> vehicles for the exploration and explication of religious truths
> and the establishment of dialogue with our 'separated brethren'
> in the* universities programs in the humanities.[17]

If the church and the seminary would take its responsibility
seriously, it would seek to develop and nurture the skills of the
artist and the prophet.

> The prophet and the artist and, sometimes, the artist-prophet
> stand over against this situation and represent the hope that the
> church may become articulate in its mission . . . Art is the
> antidote for depersonalization. The artist disciplines himself
> to compose structures of meaning. He will startle us by his
> rejection of 'classical' definitions, whether theological or
> aesthetic.[18]

The study of the technologies of mass communication are impor-
tant to the church if it is to speak relevantly to our present-day
while it avoids the dehumanizing abilities of these media to rob us
of our reason and spirit. Finally such a concern will cause the church
to re-examine its mission in light of the need for the artist-prophet.

William Kuhns suggests that the church has a mandate to become

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[17]F. Thomas Trotter, "Where are We in 'Religion and the Arts'?"
Paper presented to the Faculty, School of Theology at Claremont,
October 4, 1965, p. 1.

[18]*Ibid.,* p. 2.

". . . the viable Christian community capable of meeting the present in all its implications."[19] The assumption in this paper is that the church can realize its mandate only if it is led by a strong clergy equipped to help his people and his society cope with the potential and danger of such social forces as the mass media. But there is no common understanding of what the minister is and how he functions. There is a lack of clear definition of the role of the pastor.

Albert Outler addressed a task force on the meaning of ministry with these words,

> In my 100 years in the ministry (for mine is a sort of con-
> tinuation of my father's before me) there's never been a time
> when ministers, as a profession, have been in more confusion and
> doubt as to the meaning of their professional identity and role in
> their congregations and communities.[20]

The ministry, Outler feels, has suffered an eclipse in the eyes of society. No longer can the pastor feel assured of automatic social status or ex-officio authority. In fact the secular world nurtures a feeling that the minister may be a redundancy in a world of multiple service professions. Within the ministerial profession there has been a breakdown in the effectiveness of traditional minis-terial functions such as preaching and the power of the keys. Outler concludes,

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[19]Kuhns, p. 132.

[20]Albert Outler, "The Ministry in the United Methodist Church: Notes for St. Louis." Paper read at United Methodist Discipline Study Commission, St. Louis, September 13-14, 1973, p. 1.

The sum of all these comments is that the concept of ministry (the meaning of the ministerial office and the source of the power of the keys) has got to be deeply re-thought and re-formulated, in terms of our basic premises about the church and the meaning of Christian calling and covenant-making.[21]

Outler is not alone in sensing a crisis in the profession of ministry. Steven Mackie reporting on a major study of the ministry suggests,

There are few churches left in which the nature and form of the ministry are not being questioned. There are even fewer theological faculties or colleges left in which students and professors are not engaged in a search for new patterns of ministry.[22]

Mackie discovered, as have many others, that there is great misunderstanding between the professional and the laity about the nature of the church, the meaning of ordination and the role of the professional clergy. There is no clear-cut definition for such basic terms as "the ministry," "a professional ministry," "the ordained ministry."[23]

One of the most discussed works of recent times has been Jeffery K. Hadden's, *The Gathering Storm in the Churches*, which points to several crises looming on the horizon of Protestantism which threaten irreparable damage to the status quo.[24] At the core is a two-thrust concern. On the one hand, the church is split between an image of itself as comforter and as challenger of its society. On the

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[21]*Ibid.*, p. 5.

[22]Steven G. Mackie, *Patterns of Ministry* (London: Collins, 1969), p. 7.

[23]*Ibid.*, p. 10.

[24]Jeffery K. Hadden, *The Gathering Storm in the Churches* (New York: Anchor, 1970), p. xx.

other hand, traditional patterns of belief are in conflict with new "radical" theologies. The clergy is particularly caught in these conflicts. "The clergyman's crisis of identity grows out of the fact that the value system he has the responsibility of defending, sustaining and transmitting is in a most serious state of flux."[25] There are no definite answers from the profession or from the congregation to guide the pastor through a role struggle.

> The clergyman's identity crisis does not grow out of the fact that he encounters so many significant others, but rather that (a) the significant others often lack a sense of what the clergyman's role is, and (b) to the extent they do define the role, there is broad disagreement and conflict.[26]

The crisis does not dismiss the clergyman's need to operate within the bounds of a role pattern. The lack of consensus, in fact, makes the minister's job more difficult since he must maneuver and function within unstated guidelines—never completely sure he is meeting the expectations of his environment.

From seminary the minister is expected to have developed some skills in the tasks which the minister is called upon to perform. But there is often too little preparation for an understanding of when and how such skills are appropriate. Allen Moore puts it this way:

> An authentically competent clergyman must operate with some skills; but even more crucial is the need to know the theory behind the skill, to have awareness when a skill ceases to be appropriate, and to know how to formulate new skills as they are required.[27]

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[25]*Ibid.*, p. 240.   [26]*Ibid.*

[27]Allen J. Moore, "Education for the Practice of Ministry," Paper read at the meeting of the Graduate Professors of Christian Education, Dallas, February 5-6, 1968.

It is the theory that helps the clergyman decide on a day-to-day basis whether the activities he is involved or is asked to participate in are valid efforts for the professional minister. Whether the minister realizes it or not, when he accepts or declines an invitation he is making that decision on some understanding of the nature of ministry or the proper role of the minister. Often such an understanding is unconscious and fragmented. An assumption of this paper is that the more conscious is the minister's understanding of his role the more effective and professional will be his functioning.

As the functions of the clergy are examined patterns emerge which relate functions to one another. To bring these patterns together and to carefully reflect upon their meaning in relation to the Gospel imperatives is the start of developing a useful theology of the practice of ministry. Such a theological base can provide the kind of unified, wholistic core from which strong professional identities can be built.

Based on careful examination of the actual practice of ministry such a theology would not become an abstraction but would relate directly to the functioning professional.

Confronted by a world of accelerating change the pastor is regularly faced with new challenges and unprecedented demands on his time. A theology of practice could provide a set of norms to be balanced against other role prescriptions to help the clergyman determine his course of ministry. So, rather than limiting the pastor's activities, a practical theology can provide the sort of touchstone to

give confidence to the pastor on the cutting edge of ministerial
practice.

This paper is an attempt to grapple with the practice of
ministry in a world of new communication tools. It is my thesis that
the church can effectively utilize these new technologies if it sees
communications as a major function of Christian ministry. To demon-
strate the thesis I will develop a model of a practical theology
leaning upon the ideas of Seward Hiltner and Allen Moore. Focusing on
one aspect of that theology I will examine the functional implications
of a ministry of communications. Finally, I will examine the film
media as one tool in a ministry of communications, and point toward an
understanding of the use of film in the local parish setting.

An exploration of this sort cannot take into account all the
implications of the communications revolution or the practice of
ministry--nor should it try. Gardner Murphy has written on methodology
in psychology of religion that the discipline,

> . . . must not be attacked or reviled simply because it
> 'leaves out' vast areas of human experience in the religious
> field. It cannot possibly do justice to all the substantive
> realities. It must discover a method, develop it, apply it,
> learn from mistakes, improve the method, and ultimately try to
> see how psychology can actually be useful.[28]

Much the same thing may be said about the integration of com-
munications research and ministerial practice. The models developed
here are designed to highlight the minister as a facilitator and as a

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[28]Gardner Murphy, "A Note on Method in the Psychology of Reli-
gion," William B. Oglesby (ed.) *The New Shape of Pastoral Theology*
(Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), p. 90.

result the data which would develop models for seeing the pastor as, say, budget and planning director, theologian and so on, are not utilized. Another way of saying this is to say that all models have limited intentions and limited applications. So we must be careful not to assume more than is possible of a model and not to judge it on expectations that are beyond its scope.

The model for ministry developed in the first chapter of this paper will highlight the functions that ministers today implement. It suggests that these fall into three general categories, shepherding, ordering and communicating. We then narrow the field of ministry to the functions that cluster around the idea of communicating. Continuing in a deductive manner we move into a more intense look at the possibility of film as one tool to aid the clergy in the tasks of communicating.

The data for this study will originate primarily from studies and research within the fields of communications and practical theology. While some observations from the writer's experiences in the parish ministry will illustrate points in the work the argument does not revolve upon primary research or raw data. The testing of the ideas presented here in a parish setting would be valuable but beyond the scope of the current work.

This writer's research has not indicated any direct parallels to this approach for understanding film and ministry. Two sources in the fields of counseling and religious education come near the approach suggested here. Both sources are related and their insights form

major parts of this paper.

First has been the writings of Seward Hiltner--and particularly *Preface to Pastoral Theology*.[29] The work arises from the author's struggle to relate the pastor's role as counselor to the total ministerial role. He suggests the approach of functional investigation and sets forth the basic triad of functional perspectives. The structure Hiltner develops motivates a number of other works which look specifically at counseling functions.

Second is the doctoral dissertation submitted by Allen Moore at Boston University.[30] Moore builds upon Hiltner's thought and applies a modified function-centered approach to the study of religious education. This approach has spawned numerous papers that Professor Moore has presented including some brief explorations of communications.

Both Moore and Hiltner have been pivotal works in developing the arguments here and both will be examined carefully.

One of the tasks of this paper will be to define some terms and relate these definitions to the thesis. Two terms which may be seen in various ways need some clarification. First, it is necessary to limit the use of the term "ministry," and second, to be more precise with the term "film."

The word "ministry" is a slippery term. Inherited from the

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[29]Seward Hiltner, *Preface to Pastoral Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958).

[30]Allen J. Moore, "The Relation of Christian Education to Pastoral Theology with Reference to the Function-centered Theology of Seward Hiltner," (rough draft of an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1963).

Greek word διακονία it literally means "service." In English the same word may function as a noun or a verb.

As a noun the word has reference to those persons who perform acts of ministry. Martin Luther used the term in reference to all believers. "The priesthood of all believers" has been a crucial concept for protestantism and has been the major factor in keeping the church in the hands of the people.

The noun can also refer to the group of professional, ordained persons who devote the bulk of their time to the functions of the minister and the management of the institutional church. The role of the minister which has such a prominent place in the discussion of this paper is the role image of the professional ministry.

"Ministry" can also be used to refer to those acts of caring and compassion which fall within the bounds of the Christian's response to God's love. The archetypal figure helping to define these acts is Christ. The Christian as he has accepted God's love seeks to carry such loving concern to his neighbor. In the response he moves into a relationship of communion with God--the ultimate in communication.

This paper will use the word in both senses allowing the context to set the meaning. It seems ridiculous to say that the ministry performs ministry. Yet there are so many functions that appropriate the term that there is need for further definition.

As we will see in Chapter I ministry is always viewed from a "perspective." Several perspectives will be mentioned here but the focus will be on the perspective of communicating. From this viewpoint

the activities of the pastor can be judged by their usefulness in facilitating deeper communication. This is not to imply that this is the only perspective nor that all acts of ministry must seek this goal. It says only that by asking questions about communicating we may see a side of ministry that would otherwise be minimized.

The scope of use of the motion picture medium today begs a definition of how the term "film" is being used.

Technically the normal use of the word "film" is in reference to the plastic or nitrate base covered by either unexposed photographic emulsion or exposed, developed images of stabilized silver nitrate. Since this paper will not attempt to deal with the technical aspects of production I am not using the word in the technical sense.

Rather, film here is used in a much broader way to refer to the media of expression that has developed around the technical craft of film. Thus it is synonymous with the somewhat misleading term "motion picture" (the image doesn't move, an illusion of movement is created) and the term "cinema" which is so often associated with the commercial varieties of film making.

One aspect of the definition will be pointed to continually throughout the work. That is the wide variety of uses the film has encompassed in the present day. Least significant for our purposes is the vast field of technical filming utilized in hospitals, industry, military, sometimes in the physical and social sciences. Here the accurate reproduction of an object or an action is crucial. Manipulation of the media for expressive purposes is counter productive.

Another major division of film use are in those areas where film is used as a tool for the communication of expression or information between people. In this area are included such films as records of lectures or discussions for totally didactic purposes, films of dramatic form--whether short or feature length--including the commercial media. Experimental or personal statement film made either beyond the bounds of traditional dramatic formats or as an exploration of filmic expression and the capabilities of the media.

Clearly the latter major division is of the greatest interest to church men. Nearly all the styles in this area have direct impact on the church's ability to communicate its message within and without the fellowship. Unless further qualified then, the use of the word "film" will denote this entire division.

A word about television. There appears to be developing a use of the video technology which will create images and aesthetic standards unique to the media. At this time such developments have not had major impact on the average viewer. Examples of this use have been almost exclusively the domain of a small group of "video freaks" throughout the world. As the revolution of small format personal TV is completed this media may clearly stand on its own. Today most television viewers know TV only in its commercial, entertainment format. As a result the media is best viewed as a conveyer of live reporting and a channel for the distribution of film. A person will be able to draw many parallels, then, between the perspective on film in this paper and television as we know it.

We turn attention now to the nature of ministry and the development of a model for its understanding.

CHAPTER I

FUNCTION-CENTERED MINISTRY

A few years ago a popular magazine conducted an informal poll
of the attitudes of ministers serving in local churches.[1] Not sur-
prisingly they discovered a widely diverse set of opinions. Of the
approximately 3,000 responses, only ten percent found the ministry a
totally satisfying profession.

> Many of the remaining ninety percent felt that the tensions
> of the ministry were disturbing but not too much to pay for its
> joys; or they simply felt a continuing pull and fascination,
> which older ministers might identify as a 'call' but young min-
> isters were likely to label just that--'a strange fascination.'[2]

As they explored the tensions of ministry further, they encountered
little satisfaction with the transmitted "role" pastors are expected
to fill.

> Younger ministers were especially preoccupied by the problem
> of their role and image. They talked about 'identity' and smarted
> under what they believed to be the secular world's view of them-
> selves and their role.[3]

The dissatisfaction *McCall's* found can be seen reflected in
the rate of men leaving the ministry. It has been a disquieting fact
that a very large number of my seminary friends have left the parish,
completely disillusioned by the realities of congregational life.

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[1]Ardis Whitman, "The View from the Pulpit," *McCall's,* XCV:5
(February 1968), 83+.

[2]*Ibid.,* p. 150.　　　　　　　　[3]*Ibid.,* p. 145.

Allen Moore recently suggested that there are two causes for ministerial
defections. "This is due in part to a growing confusion as to what it
means to minister today and in part to a fear that the church in the
very near future may not be able to support financially a full-time
ministry."[4]

It seems beyond question that the Christian churches today are
involved in an unresolved crisis concerning the nature of their profes-
sional leadership. The roots of the crisis are deep and complex. No
single analysis could touch the entire reason.

For example, there is a gulf which separates the attitudes of
clergy and laity over problems or priorities. Four empirical studies
have highlighted this problem. The study by Jeffery Hadden, *The
Gathering Storm in the Churches*, mentioned in the introduction, was the
first major attitude survey to highlight. In a follow-up article
Hadden reaffirms the conclusions he reached in the first work,

> Given the present trends, the evidence of social science indi-
> cates that the membership of the future will largely consist of
> those who see the church as a place of escape from a world they
> cannot otherwise cope with. In juxtaposition with this trend are
> growing numbers of young clergy who see the central mission of the
> church as 'this-worldly.' Such a situation is hardly a promising
> one for the churches in the immediate decades ahead.[5]

These trends, Hadden feels have significant effects on the church and

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[4]Allen J. Moore, "The Place of Scientific Models and Theological
Reflection in the Practice of Ministry." Paper read at an Inaugural
Lecture for Dr. Gordon Michaelson, School of Theology at Claremont,
January 22, 1970, p. 2.

[5]Jeffery K. Hadden, "The Gathering Storm Revisited," *Journal
of Current Social Issues*, X:2 (Spring 1972), reprinted in *Vesper
Exchange*, No. 12 (September 1972), p. 3.

threaten its very continuation.

> The time is overdue for church leaders to recognize they are
> involved in a struggle for the survival of the church as a vital
> institution in society. If the church is to have a future, the
> haphazard, non-professional, semicompetent, business-as-usual
> non-policy which has dominated religious organizations will have
> to change. And there is not a great deal of time.[6]

Hadden's data and conclusions have received some support in later

opinion surveys by Cornell and Johnson and Virgil Sexton.

George Cornell and Douglas Johnson conducted a poll of atti-

tudes of churchmen in the United States and Canada under the sponsor-

ship of the National Council of Churches Section on Stewardship and

Benevolence. The main thrust of their effort was to determine

attitudes about giving and church financing but they explored other

attitudes alongside. Their results, while not as dramatic as Hadden's,

show that the clergy and laity bear different attitudes toward the

nature of the church, its mission, and the role of the clergy.

> . . . the results do indicate fine lines of distinction, and
> when these occur between clergy and the laity, they cause strains
> in the church. Since the clergy generally determine the direc-
> tions and educative vitality of the church, the differences, left
> unconfronted and unreconciled, can affect the support of the
> people for it.[7]

Much the same results were indicated in Virgil Sexton's study

of attitudes of United Methodists. His survey was an attempt to

profile the broad range of denomination attitudes including theology,

church structure, intra-church communication, social witness and clergy

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[6]*Ibid.,* p. 6.

[7]Douglas W. Johnson, and George W. Cornell, *Punctured Precon-
ceptions* (New York: Friendship Press, 1972), p. 47.

role. He found differences between the church leadership--including

clergy and a small number of deeply committed laity, with the local

parish which is predominately lay persons. The differences were not

in the selection or even definition of major issues confronting the

denomination but over the importance of the commonly accepted problems,

and how they are to be solved.

> Sharp differences appear in regard to one matter only--how to go about dealing with priorities. Local parishes demand more participation in decision-making, while leadership proclaims that local churches need strong direction.[8]

If, as these surveys indicate, there is some degree of differ-

ence in attitude between clergy and laity this can account for part of

the crisis of the clergy. With more unanimity the nature of the

prescribed role would be more clear-cut. As it is now the pastor

hears the opinions of the laity saying one thing while he feels his own

opinion is somewhat different. Yet he feels the need to hide his

private opinion to avoid conflict within the church. By doing so he

creates a kind of schizophrenia in which he maintains public "face"

while struggling to hide his personal feelings. For many this creates

a dissonance that cannot be endured.

Robert Arnott explored the dissonance in more detail. He

argues that the clergyman experiences a conflict so deep that a radical

reconception of the ministerial role is essential to lessen the

destructive effect.

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[8]Virgil Wesley Sexton, *Listening to the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), p. 22.

It is my thesis that parish ministers today are encountering enormous strains at the interface between this private identity and their public role, that the parish and the parish minister are both suffering because of certain incompatible elements which make for conflict, and that this conflict cannot be resolved without a far-reaching reconception of the public role which will relate it to the realities of modern life.[9]

Arnott suggests that the traditional understanding of the minister's role sees five functions, 1) preaching and teaching, 2) worship and the sacraments, 3) counseling and pastoral care, 4) the leadership and governance of the church, and 5) community witness and social action.[10] We might choose one of four ways of reconceiving the traditional role prescriptions. First, and most straightforward, we could reconceive these five functions in a more relevant manner.[11] Or, secondly, we might develop new forms of organization and ministry and define ministry in these new terms.[12] Thirdly, the ministry might be viewed in its nature alongside other professions, and by so doing highlight a more complete professionalism as the basis for role definition.[13] Finally, Arnott argues the understanding of the pastor as leader might form the basis for another understanding of the nature of ministry. "Another way to reconceive the role of the minister would be *to recover a sense of the contemporary significance of the ministry of leadership and governance in such a way as to let it permeate his whole work.*"[14] In this way the public role becomes better

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[9]Robert J. Arnott, "Public Role and Private Identity: The Struggle for Authenticity in the Parish Ministry," *Religion in Life,* XLI (1971), 155.

[10]*Ibid.,* p. 159.   [11]*Ibid.,* p. 160.   [12]*Ibid.*

[13]*Ibid.,* p. 161.   [14]*Ibid.,* p. 162.

clarified and the pastor would have a clear-cut understanding of the social obligations which he could accept or seek a profession more in tune with his personal ideals.

While this paper will not argue that leadership and governance should keynote a new understanding of the ministry it will argue that serious consideration of the ministerial role is necessary to alleviate the identity crisis of the parish minister.

The concept of "role" has been useful in a number of settings. The word arises in the language of anthropologists, psychologists, as well as social psychologists. As a result of its wide usage, it has assumed various meanings. Gross, Mason and McEachern have grouped the more important of these meanings into three categories.[15] The first category, most often used in anthropological research, includes "Definitions which either equate it with or define it to include normative cultural patterns . . ."[16] Role descriptions based on this category of definitions would see behaviors in relationship to the entire society and its patterns of behavior. In a second category, " . . . a role is treated as an *individual's definition of his situation with reference to his and others' social positions* . . ."[17] In the definitions grouped within this category concern is on the social status or position of a role set within a society or organization.

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[15]Neal C. Gross, Ward S. Mason, and Alexander W. McEachern, *Explorations in Role Analysis* (New York: Wiley, 1958), pp. 11-14.

[16]*Ibid.*, p. 11.

[17]*Ibid.*, p. 13.

"In a third category we would place definitions which deal with role as *the behavior of actors occupying* social positions."[18]

The third category of definitions obviously is the one I refer to in this paper when I speak of "role." Such definitions may emphasize " . . . the functional implications of behaviors, either in terms of group process or the attainment of group ends."[19] Katz and Kahn, in a textbook on organizational theory, suggest this type of definition. "Generically, role behavior refers to the recurring actions of an individual, appropriately interrelated with the repetitive activities of others so as to yield a predictable outcome."[20] The importance for Katz and Kahn of the group ends is evident a few sentences later. "The basic criterion, then, for studying role behavior is to identify the relevant social system or subsystem and locate the recurring events which fit together in converting some input into an output."[21]

It would, it seems to me, be difficult to understand the minister's role from such a definition. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to identify with any precision either the input or output of a church organization. Were one to identify such factors they would seem to be a less than satisfactory definition of the purpose of the church to a professing churchman.

Thus, I suggest, the definition of role would fall into a

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[18]*Ibid.*, p. 14.   [19]*Ibid.*

[20]Daniel Katz, and Robert L. Kahn, *The Social Psychology of Organizations* (New York: Wiley, 1966), p. 174.

[21]*Ibid.*

second group of definitions. "Another group of definitions, which still link role and behavior, emphasize the 'self-other' context in which behavior occurs: focusing on the reciprocal nature of behavior, or action as interaction."[22] Scott Greer, in an excellent monograph on social organization, proposes a definition which might fit this grouping.

> A role, then, is clearly defined complex of rights and duties assigned to the person occupying a certain position in a group. It encompasses what is expected of him and what he has a right to expect of others.[23]

In Greer's definition we can see the three basic ideas which contribute to all conceptualizations of role, that is, the focus on persons 1) in social groupings, 2) behaving, 3) in response to expectations.[24] However, contrary to other definitions, it points out the dynamic of role acquisition in the interaction between the individual and his role set. This dynamic cuts to the basic understanding of all human organizations. "We have defined human organizations as role systems . . . and the psychological basis of organizational functions in terms of motivation to fulfill organizational roles."[25]

Roles are not set patterns established in a job description or organizational chart. In practice roles are fashioned and refashioned

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[22]Gross, Mason and McEachern, p. 15.

[23]Scott A. Greer, *Social Organization* (New York: Random House, 1955), p. 22.

[24]Gross, Mason, and McEachern, p. 17.

[25]Katz and Kahn, p. 172.

in the interaction between a subject and his role set. The reciprocal communication between different people in the relationship creates the matrix of expectations within which behavior is patterned.

The subject enters the organization with his own understanding and expectation and abilities for his job. These soon come into encounter with others with whom the person is to work. "The prescriptions and proscriptions held by members of a role set are designated *role expectations*; in the aggregate they help to define his role, the behaviors which are expected of him."[26]

Through the subject's behavior and opinions he communicates to the members of his role set the expectations he brings of his role. The members who are affected by his role behavior react to his particular response and feed back their own expectations of the subject's role by some sign of satisfaction or disagreement. Normally when the subject receives this feedback, he adjusts to compensate, and re-transmits his new role pattern. The dynamics of role formation is a cycle of interaction. Katz and Kahn speak of this as a process of socialization. "We will consider role-sending as a continuing cyclical process by which each person is socialized into his organizational role, informed about the acceptability of his role behavior, and corrected as necessary."[27]

Problems arise when the subject cannot or will not change his role behavior, or when conflicting messages are sent from the role set.

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[26]*Ibid.*, p. 175.   [27]*Ibid.*, p. 172.

Where there is consensus of expectations the set of expectations held

by the subject will reflect to a high degree the expectations of his

role set.

> By a process of trial and error (or happenstance), some
> functions cluster in the person of one individual, others become
> the responsibility of others. Over a period of time, such a
> cluster of functions becomes standardized, and when this takes
> place a communicable pattern results.[28]

When conflict appears, and it usually does in such an inter-

action, the subject will either adjust, resist, or leave the organi-

zation, depending on the strength of the factors which motivate his

membership.

Voluntary associations have a less tangible set of motivational

forces than do other organizations. The position of the leader in

such groups is, consequently, more precarious.

> Voluntary associations are less likely to give their leaders
> a mandate to develop their own goals for the organization. The
> leader must operate within the boundaries of his proscribed role
> as leader. To deviate beyond the role prescriptions of his office
> is to invite conflict with the membership.[29]

The leader in the voluntary association that is the church in

the United States, as we noted earlier, operates without the clear-cut

office to fall back upon. So what image of his role is he to fall

back upon in crisis?

Evidence indicates that more definite role images have

permeated the church at various times in its history. We turn now to

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[28]Greer, p. 22.

[29]Jeffery K. Hadden, *The Gathering Storm in the Churches*
(New York: Anchor, 1970), p. 32.

look more carefully at these images.

A. HISTORICAL APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING MINISTRY

There is no clear-cut point to begin an examination of the functions that are associated with the ministerial role. Each function has had its precedents in human culture.

For example, John McNeill has written a major study which focuses on the background of those functions we associate with counseling or shepherding.[30] McNeill terms these functions *Seelsorge* or the cure of souls which involve " . . . the sustaining and curative treatment of persons in those matters that reach beyond the requirements of the animal life."[31] Such functions have been expressed in Christian as well as non-Christian and pre-Christian cultures. McNeill finds roots in early Hebrew life as well as extra-biblical cultures. "Modern historians recognize in the wise man of Israel a common phenomenon of ancient Semitic cultures. Egypt and Babylon had a similar class of dispensers of guidance."[32]

Greeks also developed roles for the exercise of spiritual cures. In a style more analytic than the poets of the wisdom traditions such figures as Socrates, Plato and Cicero sought to comfort and cure spiritual malaise. But Greek thought had its limits.

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[30]John T. McNeill, *A History of the Cure of Souls* (New York: Harper & Row, 1951).

[31]*Ibid.*, p. vii.

[32]*Ibid.*, p. 2.

> In Greek and Roman society philosophy and piety could not in the cure of souls draw upon such a body of fixed belief as Judaism and Christianity possessed. Yet in this realm the debt of later ages to the philosophers is immeasurable.[33]

We can see this debt particularly evident in the work of the Church Fathers.

It is far beyond the scope of this paper to detail exhaustively the background of some or all of the functions of ministry. Rather, the immediate task is to provide a sketch of some of the times when ministry was more clearly defined than in the present time. So we narrow our sights to look more carefully at the early church, the medieval period, the reformation, and the period of the great revival.

Ministry in the early church lacked the formal designations and structures that were to emerge as the institutional church structures grew. Certainly the first ministerial images grew from an understanding of the person and mission of Jesus. "The nature of Jesus' ministry became characteristic of the ministry of the Early Church. Ministry was a life of service and love."[34]

Rather than a designated group with responsibility for service the early church tended to avoid distinctions among the fellowship with functions assumed as talents of individual members dictated. Allen Moore suggests that a specialized ministry emerged at the end of

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[33]*Ibid.*, p. 41.

[34]Allen J. Moore, "The Relation of Christian Education to Pastoral Theology with Reference to the Function-centered Theology of Seward Hiltner," (rough draft of an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1963) Chapter II, p. 3.

the first and the second century.

It is probably accurate to suggest that the function of service belongs to the whole church and not just to the clergy. There is no evidence in the New Testament of a sharp distinction between the clergy and laity. *Laos* or laity in its New Testament meaning referred to all members of the church. It is true that in the latter half of the first century and in the second that a specialized ministry did emerge out of the laity to meet the needs of the growing church. This ministry was one of function and not one of status. In fact, evidence seems to support that there were a variety of functions, some shared by clergy and laity.[35]

While specialization did emerge, such differences did not

necessarily refer to a distinction in the value or importance of the

individual workers.

There are no distinctions of 'inferior' and 'superior' among these workers in the churches. They are all recipients and agents of the same Spirit; and whether some of them always exercised the one kind of function or the other (that is, superintending or helping), or whether all of them at certain times exercised both functions, they were equally members of the body of Christ, equally effective functioning and, therefore equally significant.[36]

Such equality was the case generally, however, some distinction

and emphasis was given to the apostles, who may be considered the first

ministers to be seen in the church.

In a word, there may have been differences of opinion among the early Christians as to just who the apostles were; but there are many indications that from the beginning the term designated a special and restricted class--eyewitnesses of the event itself, commissioned as his ambassadors by Jesus Christ in a unique sense. If this was not true, there ceases to be any discoverable ground for the primacy of the apostle.[37]

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[35]*Ibid.*, Chapter II, p. 4.

[36]John Knox, "The Ministry in the Primitive Church," in H. Richard Niebuhr, and Daniel Day Williams (eds.) *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), p. 11.

[37]*Ibid.*, p. 5.

By the time of Paul there had developed an understanding of
multiple functions of ministry which shared a common unity.[38]

> It is probably not taking too much liberty with Paul to suggest
> that although there is a variety of functions--preaching, teaching,
> healing, interpreting--these functions are all part of a whole and
> just as the eye can not be the whole body neither can one function.
> As all the parts of the body are necessary, so are all the gifts,
> workings and functions necessary for the whole of ministry.[39]

The ideal of multiple functions within a unity is an important facet of

the approaches taken here. We should not, as Knox cautions, equate

these functions with the offices which developed much later.

> Let it be noted that in all of this discussion so far we have
> been dealing with functions or with vocations, but not with
> offices. For Paul there were teachers and prophets, but hardly
> the *offices* of teacher and prophet.[40]

The first groups to develop around the functions were probably

the administrators. They took their place alongside the deacons who

formed the loose group of service-oriented ministers.

> Of the several ministries of the local church, it is natural
> that those of the 'administrators' and 'helpers' should have been
> the first to receive official status. These are the least
> obviously spiritistic of them all, the most clearly susceptible
> of being filled by human election or appointment. Thus the
> 'bishops' and 'deacons' can be thought of as being, at least in
> the area of the church which Paul's letters had earlier represented,
> the first official ministers.[41]

The administrative functions of the apostles later became

organized--as James suggests into the more efficient monoepiscopacy.

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[38]See I Cor. 13 for one list of functions.

[39]Moore, "The Relation . . . ," Chapter II, pp. 4-5.

[40]Knox, p. 18.

[41]*Ibid.*

The episcopal officers or bishops became the guardians of tradition and appointed apostolic successors. A further primary function was the presiding over the Eucharistic table.

By the second century the teachers and preachers had emerged as pastoral offices, though C. H. Dodd suggests there was no clear-cut line between them.[42]

> The word 'teacher' suggests instruction in the more ordinary sense, a setting forth, perhaps in somewhat more objective fashion, of the fact of the tradition and the truth of the gospel, the inculcation of true beliefs, the encouraging of appropriate ethical impulses and conduct.[43]

The prophets provided a perspective for the community on its history and goals.

> The term 'prophet' suggests the 'numinous'--visions, revelations, being in 'the Spirit,' initiation into divine secrets, and the like. The prophet, endowed with this ecstatic character and given access to these sacred mysteries, reports his experiences and interprets their meaning, as far as he is able, to the congregation. But most important in his message, as in that of the teacher also, would always be the good news of God's action in Christ, the event of Christ's advent, life, death and resurrection, which had so recently occurred--which indeed was still occurring, for the coming of the Spirit was a part of the event and Christ was soon to come again to bring to fulfillment what had been begun. The prophet would not only be fully persuaded of the event and acutely aware of its implications, but he would be an unusually sensitive participant in the new common life which had issued from it. He would also be extraordinarily capable of communicating the concrete meaning of the new life, the life of the Spirit, to others and of making articulate for them their inmost and deepest yearnings and satisfactions. The prophet was able to speak in such a way that the believer would find himself 'convicted,' 'called to account,' the 'secrets of his heart . . . disclosed' so that 'falling on his face' he would 'worship God' and 'declare that God was really present' (I Cor. 14:16, 25).[44]

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[42]Cited in *Ibid.*, p. 15.   [43]*Ibid.*, p. 14.

[44]*Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

The functions carried by charismatic individuals gradually

became more organized and formal. As Allen Moore notes,

> The growth of the church in the second and third centuries and
> the practical necessity of correcting the abuse of the functions by
> some led to an increasing regulation of ministry and its functions.
> The Ancient Church saw the rise of a constitutional or institu-
> tional ministry and a decline of the charismatic ministry charac-
> teristic of the Early Church. Authority passed out of the hands
> of the many to representatives who were selected, trained, and
> assigned authority for the functions.[45]

The next major stage we will explore is a time when the offices and

orders were more clearly defined.

Not only were distinctions more defined between ordained and

lay persons but there gradually grew a panoply of orders and offices.

George Williams describes one sevenfold system which designated grave-

diggers, doorkeepers, lectors, subdeacons, deacons, presbyters and

bishops among the ordained.[46] In three major Christian figures, John

Chrysostom, Ambrose and Augustine can be seen the concern that the

clergy be separated from the laity by the emulation of the basic

classical virtues such as prudence or wisdom, justice, fortitude and

temperance supported by the Christian virtues of faith, hope and love.

The development of the episcopacy was a major concern of

these writers. He was to have the functions which we now associate

with the clergyman. As Williams points out, "Besides his pentential

and liturgical functions the bishop was for Chrysostom, pre-eminent

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[45]Moore, "The Relation . . . ," Chapter II, pp. 13-14.

[46]George H. Williams, "The Ministry in the Later Patristic
Period (314-450)," in Niebuhr and Williams, p. 65.

a teacher and preacher. As teacher he wards off heresy."[47] As the

church became a well established part of the world the economic power

grew. The bishop, as leader, gained power and authority in the

business community. Roland Bainton points out that this power actually

bridged the gulf between the clergy and laity.

> To be sure, in the first centuries the bishop was the adminis-
> trator of the Church's goods but in the Middle Ages he was more,
> and the Church's business was so enlarged, so intricate, and so
> geared into all of the property and commercial activities that
> the difference between the cleric and lay was no more than the
> former was more successful.[48]

As the tide of events brought more secular power into the

hands of churchmen the task of the bishop increased. "Functions of

government devolved upon Churchmen."[49] With the invasion of various

barbaric tribes into Christendom the tasks of Governance grew more

important. Clergy participated, and indeed led in wars and defensive

actions. The crusades were mounted because, as Bainton points out,

the church was convinced that God had willed it.

Papal power grew helter skelter. Civil authorities fell under

appointment of the Bishop of Rome. A civil order was established on

theocratic ideals. The force of authority lay in the hands of the

Pope.

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[47]*Ibid.*, p. 70.

[48]Roland Bainton, "The Ministry in the Middle Ages," in
Niebuhr and Williams, p. 86.

[49]*Ibid.*, p. 87.

This authority was exercised without direct force of arms.
The Pope might indeed call upon one prince to discipline another.
The Popes had not been above leading armies to repel the Normans.
But Innocent III did not undertake to police the world. He ruled
by admonition and the spiritual weapon of excommunication carrying
with it exclusion from blessedness in the life eternal.[50]

But the governance also was seen in the growth of a church
structure at the grassroots. Bishops assumed control of churches in
wider areas. Vicars and private chaplains stood among the regular
clergy administering localized parishes. The parish priest performed
many functions.

The parish priest at any rate was the most instructed person
in the community. To him men turned as counselor, teacher, lawyer,
doctor, and friend. His foremost function was the performance of
the Sacraments.[51]

Pastoral care was not overlooked in all levels of the ministry.
Pastors, as McNeill suggests, exercised care over members of the
flock--particularly the disorderly.[52] Governance of souls extended
to guidance for the troubled and the exhortation to confession and
repentance for misdeeds. "Lying deep in the experience and culture
of the early Christian communities are the closely related practices
of mutual edification (*aedeficatio mutua*) and fraternal correction
(*correptio fraterna*)."[53]

Preaching was examined and bore an exhortative nature close
to that of counseling. Bainton reports, "A booklet entitled *Instruc-*
tions for Parish Priests by John Myrc (Merk), written in English some-

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[50]*Ibid.*, p. 92.

[51]*Ibid.*, p. 96.

[52]McNeill, p. 100.

[53]*Ibid.*, p. 85.

what earlier than 1450, is rather remarkable for enjoining preaching
and then saying so little about it."[54] It is rather, an examination
of the duties of the pastor and the need for a virtuous life for the
preacher. This work, as others of this era, looks to preaching as a
function of the total life and work of the pastor.

It was up to the reformation, though, to highlight preaching
as the pivotal function of the minister. Wilhelm Pauck points to the
centrality of this function for the rebellious clergy.

> Only the new understanding of the gospel achieved by Luther
> and his fellow reformers led to such an emphasis upon the
> proclamation of the Word that henceforth the very reality of the
> church was grounded in preaching.[55]

For Luther, as Pauck notes, this emphasis was an outgrowth of
the twofold message of the reformer.

> In the last resort only two things mattered: The Word of
> God and faith. Or, as he put it: 'The sum of the gospel is
> this: Who believes in Christ has the forgiveness of sins.'
> Faith in Christ can be real only if it depends on the Bible.
> Nothing, therefore, is as important for religion as to make
> the Bible accessible and to proclaim its message.[56]

While the Medieval Church built distinctions between clergy
and laity into their system the reformers, by proclaiming access to
the scriptures for everyone, moved to break down the gulf. This did
not, however, invalidate the idea of the clergy though it limited their
power.

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[54]Bainton, p. 99.

[55]Wilhelm Pauck, "The Ministry in the Time of the Continental
Reformation," in Niebuhr and Williams, p. 110.

[56]*Ibid.*, p. 111.

All Christian believers, therefore, are ministers, servants, priests, by virtue of their faith in the Word of God, but not everyone of them can or should assume the function of preaching, teaching, and counseling. For the sake of order, certain ones must be set apart from the group of believers to undertake the office of the preacher.[57]

Other major reformation figures, Zwingli, Bucer and Calvin, echoed the emphasis on the centrality of preaching but explored the range of functions of ministry.

Zwingli, the German Swiss pastor of Zurich, published a treatise in 1524 titled *Der Hirt* or *The Pastor*. Among the arguments presented there was the concern for preaching the true gospel but the realization that this must be followed by other forms of pastoral care.

Zwingli stresses the faithful preaching of repentance from the Scripture. But proclamation must be followed up by instruction and devoted service to the people. The shepherd must be alert to prevent the sheep that is healed from falling again into sickness.[58]

Teaching, counseling, social action and so forth were deemed acceptable practices of ministry growing out of--but not replacing-- preaching as the primal act.

Martin Bucer in Strassbourg also defends the need for concern for the welfare of the flock. In his book *On the True Cure of Souls* (1538) he outlines, according a fivefold ministry,

. . . to draw to Christ those who are alienated, to lead back those who have been drawn away; to secure amendment of life in those who fall into sin; to strengthen weak and sickly Christians; to preserve Christians who are whole and strong, and urge them forward in all good.[59]

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[57]*Ibid.*, p. 112.   [58]McNeill, pp. 192-193.

[59]Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 178.

Bucer tried, in vain, to establish a fourfold order of ministry with secular as well as religious political power. Speaking of the ideas of civil government by clergy, Pauck writes,

> In these sentences, Bucer formulated succinctly the conception of a Christian commonwealth which guided him throughout his career and which inspired the leaders in other Reformed city-states: Christ is the governor of the city and he governs through his Word. His vicars are the preachers who administer the Word. To them, the teachers and interpreters of the Word of Christ, the sociopolitical order must be subject.[60]

While Bucer had little success in realizing the goals of his proposal in Strassbourg the climate was different under the stern leadership of John Calvin in Geneva. He proposed a plan to the government of Geneva which gave the church some authority over civil matters.

Calvin proposed a fourfold order of ministry with preachers, teachers, elders and deacons. The pastors were to preach, teach, administer the sacraments, and enforce church discipline.[61]

They formed a Consistory whose duties included the careful nurture of Christian principles enforced by cooperation of civil authorities. Pauck reports, "Gradually, it (the Consistory) imposed, under his guidance, a strict and very minute discipline upon the people of Geneva."[62]

Teachers sought the education of new clergy, elders, with the pastors administered church discipline, and the deacons administered

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[60]Pauck, pp. 128-129.   [61]*Ibid.*, p. 130.

[62]*Ibid.*

poor-relief and benevolences. The system of Calvin was defined and

demanding, yet it allowed for close pastoral care.

McNeill reports this about Calvin, "In his whole reforming work

he was a shepherd of souls."[63] Visiting, the taking of confession, the

seeking of repentance, were significant parts of the duties of the clergy.

> The Protestant director does not claim so much of authority;
> nor seek to make permanent the relationship in which he gives
> counsel. He is a physician for a crisis who expects his patient
> to recover and normally to control his own health; he does not
> expect to continue in attendance, examining and prescribing for
> the patient with every visit over an indefinite period.[64]

McNeill continues by citing numerous examples of pastoral care per-

formed by the Geneva reformer.[65]

In the Reformation, as in the period of the Middle Ages, we

can see a diversity of practices labeled ministry. But these have

focused upon one or another function from which they can be explored.

Certainly the kind of exploration we have done is general. There has

always been great diversity in ministerial practice. Indeed, from the

counter-reformation until today there are many viewpoints about minis-

terial function. One that has had impact upon the writer's denomina-

tion was the Wesleyan understanding of ministry. If the Methodists

suffer from a pastoral identity crisis today they might look to a time

when no such problem was evident.

Like the Reformation pastor the emphasis in Wesleyanism was

preaching--but an evangelical mode of proclamation practiced by

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[63]McNeill, p. 198.   [64]*Ibid.*, p. 200.

[65]*Ibid.*, pp. 201ff.

itinerant preachers. David Shipley notes that this emphasis did not

overlook the other pastoral offices.

> They were called Methodists, primarily, by the fact *that* they preached. They were convinced a prime requisite of the clergy was to preach, in season and out of season. They meant to preach--not to read sermons prepared by others or themselves. Hence, a Methodist clergyman was one who, while not neglecting, indeed being more than ever before concerned with his pastoral and priestly offices, was now awakened to the mandate of preaching--submitting to be a bearer of the vital tradition, the dynamic *kerygma*, ensconced in Bible, Prayer Book, Articles, and Homilies from the heart of the dead past across the void to the living present in modes of communication uniquely amenable to the hungers of his own generation of men.[66]

It was recognized that while conversion motivated by the preached word

was a desirable first step it needed to be followed by an organization

to build and sustain the new Christian.

> Preaching ensuing from a special 'call' and the reception of needed gifts, however, was clearly discerned to be put a part of the ministry of the church. Preaching, declared Wesley, dare not be separated, as a ministerial office from the concomitant of 'after-care' or the development of societies within the parish of the church.[67]

Wesley's follow-up organization was the "band" and later the society.

> The earliest units of organization of the People called Methodists consisted of the 'bands,' or groups for mutual confession and discipline. Wesley gives the rules for these groups under date of December 25, 1738. The 'classes' and 'societies' were forming in the following year; and from these some members were taken into the 'bands,' which had a more strictly remedial discipline. They were people who especially 'needed to pour out their hearts' to one another.[68]

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[66]David C. Shipley, "The Ministry in Methodism in the Eighteenth Century," in Gerald O. McCulloh (ed.) *The Ministry in the Methodist Heritage* (Nashville: Board of Education, Methodist Church, 1960), pp. 15-16.

[67]*Ibid.*, p. 19.   [68]McNeill, p. 279.

This was further subdivided into smaller "classes."

> The societies were subdivided into classes of about twelve
> members each, men and women, under a class leader. The members
> were to 'help each other to work out their salvation.' Wesley
> testifies that they obtained what was to them a totally new
> experience of Christian fellowship, and began to bear one
> another's burdens.69

The basic function can now be seen as pastoral care in small

groups. And clearly the class leader functioned as a pastoral

shepherd.

> But it has been noted Methodist preaching had, always, to be
> related to auditors in Society. This, of course, involved the
> itinerant, inevitably, in the complexities of interpersonal
> relationships within the Society. In these relationships he had,
> perforce, to jettison authoritative status. He became one of the
> persons in and of the Society. He could not think of himself as
> possessing the power the pastor or of functioning in that role,
> but, however designated, the itinerant practiced pastoral coun-
> seling. Indeed the statusless basis of permissiveness character-
> istic of the preacher in this situation, in no small measure,
> antedates much that is now taught in our schools of pastoral
> counseling.70

The classes, however, functioned in ways to minister beyond themselves.

> The members were to 'do good of every possible sort,' to feed
> the hungry, clothe the naked, visit or help those sick or in
> prison, and also to 'instruct, reprove and exhort' those they
> should meet; to do business preferably with one another; to be
> diligent and frugal, and to attend worship and practice prayer and
> abstemious habits. The rules read like a description of the life
> of the early Christians: there is a suggestion, too, of the
> medieval "Works of Mercy' and of Puritan ideals of conduct. The
> bands, classes and societies constituted a structure of active
> groups engaged in the mutual cure of souls in a way that would
> have delighted Bucer or Spencer.71

In manner like their leader the people with a method were exhorted to

social action as well as pastoral visitation and care.

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[69] *Ibid.*   [70] Shipley, pp. 22-23.   [71] McNeill, p. 279.

Teaching also became an important part of early Methodism.
Shipley points to the leaders concern with the development and proper
training of lay-itinerant preachers. This concern was met by a
program of reading and study for the fledgling pastor and the direct
teaching intervention of Wesley in annual conferences and in volumous
personal correspondence.[72] McNeill suggests that the correspondence
had a pastoral as well as didactic dimension.

> His letters are the epistles of an apostle. Even where he
> writes of administrative problems, the dominant note is that of
> meeting the spiritual needs of men and women. This meant not
> merely bringing them into a religious life by the experience of
> conversion, but also holding them on the right way and reclaiming
> those who lapsed from it.[73]

The accounts of pastoral contacts of Wesley in this manner are many.[74]
And so we may see that the heritage of the Methodists can be found to
begin with some definite ideas on the nature and role of the pastor.

In the next section we will look carefully at several models
which organize the patterns we have seen in the historical concepts
of ministry. It is these models which guide our thoughts on the
ministry.

B. FUNCTION-CENTERED MODELS

In 1956, H. Richard Niebuhr working with two other prominent
theological professors, Daniel Day Williams and James Gustafson
published the first of a five-volume report on *The Study of Theological*

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[72]Shipley, p. 24.   [73]McNeill, p. 280.

[74]See McNeill, pp. 281ff. for some examples.

Education in the United States and Canada.[75] The initial volume

concentrated on the nature of the church, the function of ministry

and the implications of both on theological curriculum. It has

persisted as a major effort to link the functions of the pastor to a

practical theological structure.

The starting point for the exploration was the definitions of

the church and the non-church "world." After all, Niebuhr argues,

"Without a definition of Church it is impossible to define adequately

the work of the ministry for which the school is to prepare its

students."[76] Aware of the centuries of debate on the nature of the

church the panel opted for a definition which allowed exploration of

the invisible church as well as the visible institutional forms.

"By Church, first of all, we mean the subjective pole of the objective

rule of God."[77] As such, it is intimately related to the will of the

Father and the activities of the Spirit, yet it is not to be identified

with them. Rather, it is the location of the activities of the cre-

ated subject seeking to worship, apprehend and emulate his creator

and sustainer. It exists in one sense in the institutional forms

which are visible though it is not limited to these expressions. It

is in balance with the world but is not identified with it.

> The world is the community of those before God who feel
> rejected by God and reject him; again it is the community of
> those who do not know God and seem not to be known by him; or

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[75]H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Purpose of the Church and Its Min-
istry* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956).

[76]*Ibid.*, p. 18.   [77]*Ibid.*, p. 19.

it is the community of those who knowing God do not worship him. In all cases it is the community to which the church addresses itself with its gospel, to which it gives an account of what it has seen and heard in divine revelation, which it invites to come and see and hear. The world is the community to which Christ comes and to which he sends his disciples. On the other hand the world is the community of those who are occupied with temporal things.[78]

The church as the community of the rule of God finds its purpose in the increase among men of the love of God and neighbor.[79] Toward this end and in this context the pastor directs his actions.

Turning to a historical review of those functions the study points to times when an understanding of pastoral functions was more clear than in these times.

Since the days described in the New Testament Christian ministers have preached and taught; they have led worship and administered sacraments; they have presided over the church and exercised oversight over its work; they have given pastoral care to individuals in need. Though at times these functions have been distributed among specialized orders of the clergy, still each minister, in his own domain, has needed to exercise all of them. Yet whenever there has been a clear conception of the office one of these functions has been regarded as central and the other functions have been ordered so as to serve, not indeed it, but, the chief purpose that it served directly.[80]

Furthermore, a clear-cut conception of the function of ministry has been accompanied by at least four factors: what the chief work of the pastor was and the chief purpose of all its functions; the nature of a ministerial call, the source of pastoral authority and some understanding of the people whom the minister served.[81]

Niebuhr, Williams and Gustafson suggest that such a clear-cut

[78]*Ibid.*, p. 26.

[79]*Ibid.*, p. 31.

[80]*Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

[81]*Ibid.*, p. 58.

idea is emerging in the understanding of the minister as a pastoral director.[82] This emerging image can be seen in the styles of church architecture that emphasizes the church office as a center of the community's activities. A distortion of this image can be seen in the pastoral "big operator." Such a concept is not new. It has, in fact, a definite historical precedent.

> The pastoral director of a contemporary church has his historical antecedent. His predecessor is to be found in the bishop or overseer of an ancient church, a man who, unlike modern bishops, was not primarily entrusted with oversight of many clergymen and local churches but was elected to oversee a single local church.[83]

The traditional ministerial functions of preaching, teaching, counseling, social action, worship leadership are still performed by the pastoral director but he emphasizes the function of governance. "His first function is that of building or 'edifying' the church; he is concerned in everything that he does to bring into being a people of God who as a church will serve the purpose of the Church in the local community and the world."[84]

The Niebuhr, Gustafson and Williams study is only part of a larger work whose main purpose is not only an understanding of the role of the pastor but a guidepost for understanding and planning theological education. The image of the pastoral director is an attempt to understand trends and not to project a unifying image for the clergy.

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[82]The authors are not satisfied with the name because of some unfortunate implications, but they have no better one to use. See p. 80.

[83]*Ibid.*, p. 82.   [84]*Ibid.*

Two things might be said about it here.

First the image is not supported by empirical data--or at least if it is, such data is not cited in the course of the argument. The studies cited at the start of this chapter indicate that there is no single image unifying clergy or laity today. Indeed, to bridge the gulf of this age of pluralism between and within denominations by *one* core image would seem to be a risky business.

Secondly, it is far too easy to assume Niebuhr's group has proposed a full-fledged model for ministry. But the task force has not drawn the outlines of a functional typology. All they have done is lift up one function as appearing central to their view of ministry in 1956.

For a more complete model of ministry we turn our attention to Seward Hiltner's "function-centered theology."

Seward Hiltner brings to the study of the ministry a rich background in practicing and teaching pastoral counseling. Now retired, Hiltner has taught at Princeton and the University of Chicago and has lectured at many other major universities. His credentials include work with inter-church agencies as well as service in the parish ministry.

As Hiltner describes the nature of pastoral counseling he notes two dimensions. First, counseling involves the integration of theoretical knowledge from psychology and theology with the practice of ministry. Secondly, while certain ministerial acts emphasize counseling techniques there are other ways they may be analyzed and there are

counseling ramifications in such pastoral activities as preaching, teaching and so on, though their primary impact is not counseling. In a work published in 1958, Hiltner grapples with the nature of ministry and the relationship between pastoral counseling and other activities of the clergyman.[85] He suggests that counseling be related to the entire body of theological knowledge.

> Always concerned with the theoretical, Hiltner has been anxious that the operations of the pastor become more than an applied theology. He insists that not only are foundations for operations necessary, but that findings from the study of these operations be related systematically to theological knowledge.[86]

The body of theological knowledge can be separated into the subgroup which is concerned with logic-centered doctrine and the group which is concerned with operation or ministerial function. Pastoral care and counseling is related to the theory of pastoral theology.

> Pastoral theology is defined here as that branch or field of theological knowledge and inquiry that brings the shepherding perspective to bear upon all the operations and functions of the church and minister and then draws conclusions of a theological order from reflection on these observations.[87]

A number of implications arise from this definition.

First, and most important for this paper, is the idea of "perspectives." The church, especially during the nineteenth century, understood ministry as organized into "offices" such as homiletics, catechetics and poimenics. This way of understanding ministry implied

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[85]Seward Hiltner, *Preface to Pastoral Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958).

[86]Moore, "The Relation . . . ," Chapter III, p. 2.

[87]Hiltner, p. 20.

that one or the other office was employed in the act of service.

Missing in this way of seeing things was the dimension of complexity

which could see the dynamics of the other offices present also. A

perspective, is a way of seeing ministry as a multi-dimensioned act

which one can understand from various views or perspectives.

> The term 'perspective' suggests that there is a certain point of view in the subject who is performing the viewing or feeling or helping. But it implies also that this subject is not completely described by this slant or point of view. If he were not capable of other points of view as well, which need not be competitive, we should be speaking of him in entirety and not of an aspect of him.[88]

Each perspective implies the relation of the subject to the

object.[89] It is a relational term that defines and focuses the

ministerial activity.

> A perspective has focus. It is directed to a particular person or persons in need or a situation requiring attention. The act of ministry has to be focused by a perspective which is demanded by the situation. Likewise, a certain viewpoint is taken in order to reflect upon a function or operation in order to arrive at theological conclusions.[90]

For Hiltner there can be no escaping perspectives since it is a natural

way of relating to the ministry.

> Each of us finds one or more perspectives, or ways of inquiring, that bring home to us the meaning of the faith more deeply than do others. Such 'bents,' properly heeded and pursued, are forms of specialization, whether they involve much book learning or not. To neglect them, under the mistaken notion that the general prac- titioner is a specialist in no sense at all, will mean impoverish- ment of any ministry. Provided they are pursued so that they eventually shed light on theology in general, they are positive, integrative, and indispensable. On the other hand if these bents

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[88]*Ibid.*, p. 18.   [89]*Ibid.*

[90]Moore, "The Relation . . . ," Chapter III, p. 9.

should be used to defend one against exploring certain other things for which he feels less kinship but which are still necessary, then specialism would be failing in its proper function.[91]

"Perspectives" allow Hiltner to move from the empirically oriented viewing of the practice of ministry toward the organizing and structuring of that information in a theory or theology.

What he means by his definition is the function-centered theology is concerned with the empirical study of ministerial operations and events from a perspective that will delimit the field of inquiry which will make possible the asking and answering of theological questions.[92]

Each act, is never completely explained by one perspective.

Implied in this concept of perspective is the fact that a subject is never completely exhausted when viewed from one standpoint. There are other perspectives equally valuable in the operation of the pastor and the church, and they are never in competition but are always related to each other. There are times when the need or situation causes one perspective to rise to dominance in the study or action.[93]

Therefore a diversity of knowledge--both practical and theoretical--can bear upon the question of ministry. But in spite of the diversity there is a unity in the common body of theological knowledge. It gives room for both the specialist and the generalist to operate.

Moore says it this way:

By accepting a definition which utilizes a perspective, Hiltner resolves both the problem of imperializing one particular viewpoint and the problem of compartmentalizing the work of ministry into segmented viewpoints.[94]

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[91]Hiltner, pp. 35-36.

[92]Moore, "The Relation . . . ," Chapter III, p. 4.

[93]*Ibid.*, p. 8.

[94]*Ibid.*, p. 5.

Hiltner puts it in this fashion:

> The answer is that the body of divinity, as the general
> structure through which theological inquiry proceeds, is not a
> series of pigeonholes into which persons are placed, one to a hole.
> Perspectives and inquiries may and do overlap. The body of
> divinity is to help the organization and advancement of theological
> knowledge and wisdom, not to compartmentalize those who would
> advance the knowledge and wisdom. The structure is made for man,
> not man for the structure.[95]

Pastoral theology is the body of knowledge arising from the
perspective of shepherding or pastoral care. It is to be considered
a disciplined branch of theology just as biblical, historical or other
theologies, though it is concerned with the actual operations of
ministry.

Shepherding involves the process of reversing the personal
damage of spiritual disease. The impairment of function--whether
physical or mental--is a disease. The pastor can speak to one dimen-
sion of such a disease and through the process of ministry begin a
program of therapy. "A formal definition of healing, taking the
factors noted into account, then becomes: *the restoration of functional
wholeness that has been impaired as to direction and for schedule.*"[96]
Hiltner suggests that one element that can be energized whenever
ministry is performed is this power of restoration.

Shepherding also involves the activities of sustaining or
"standing by" in times of crisis.[97] "Its relevance is indicated in
two main types of situation: when there is shock or loss and when
some irreversible process of impairing is at work."[98] It is this

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[95]Hiltner, p. 37.

[96]*Ibid.*, p. 90.

[97]*Ibid.*, p. 116.

[98]*Ibid.*, p. 143.

dimension of ministry that bridges the gulf until the processes of

healing may be mobilized.

A third dynamic involved in the acts of shepherding is guiding.

"We shall contend that such guiding, if it is part of shepherding, is

eductive in character--that it 'leads out' something that may be

regarded as either within the person or potentially available to him

(through resources other than ourselves)."[99] The pastor can function

as a guide to actualize the potential. He achieves this, according to

Hiltner, as he relates to the parishioner in a manner that is neither

coercive, persuasive or interpretive but offers the expertise of a

trained concerned friend who has been familiar with the sort of terrain

the parishioner finds himself in.

Hiltner recognizes two other major foci or perspectives on

ministry which he labels cognate: "communicating" and "organizing."

> The two perspectives cognate with shepherding are what will be
> called 'communicating' and 'organizing.' The terms are used in
> their present participial form, communicating and organizing,
> rather than in the noun form of communication and organization.
> This is to show that the perspectives they define are active and
> in process. This should help us keep in mind that such branches
> of theology do not merely examine bodies of subject matter already
> drawn from observation, but also are constantly engaged in such
> investigation.[100]

Communicating is the perspective which focuses upon the trans-

mission of the "Word" to and into the hearts and minds of the people.

It is concerned with persons within the faith as well as outside of it

and with one-to-one as well as mass communication settings. As such

it utilizes information available to it from a wide variety of sources.

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[99]*Ibid.*, p. 151.   [100]*Ibid.*, p. 55.

To explain this, Hiltner describes the field theory which suggests that, like iron filings around a magnet, knowledge may be diverse but still focused by its relation to the poles of the magnet. The magnet, or saving truth of the gospel, unifies seemingly unrelated information in such a way that it helps provide a way to understand the entire body of information.

> With such a theory students of the perspective of communicating are, therefore, at one and the same time compelled to rethink and rework that which is essential and distinctive and focal about the gospel, and are driven to examine anew the findings and methods and conceptions of all areas of human knowledge for the light they may shed upon the processes of communicating. In the process of inquiry they must move toward theological depth and operational breadth.[101]

Field theory allows the examination of the individual aspects of communication without compartmentalizing them or losing the perspective on the whole. The significance of it can be seen in Hiltner's words,

> When communicating the gospel is viewed in this way, two things become possible. First, that which is distinctive, unique, saving, and ultimate about the message can and must be emphasized, albeit with a humility fully aware that any man's knowledge and assimilation of it is limited. Second, all true human knowledge (and ways of securing knowledge) can and must be examined for the possible light they shed upon *our reception* of saving truth over and above their own autonomous significance.[102]

Traditionally the functions of preaching, teaching and converting have been identified with communicating the gospel. In the next section of this paper we will see that volumes have been written identifying the ministry with one or the other of these functions. But for a function-centered approach, we can see the dimension of

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[101]*Ibid.*, p. 59.   [102]*Ibid.*

communication in all pastoral functions. Hiltner does, however, suggest that there are three subgroupings of functions which are specifically communication oriented.

> As interrelated aspects of the function of communicating the gospel, therefore we can accept: (1) learning, understanding, or instructing; (2) realizing, deepening, or edifying; and (3) celebrating, reminding, or commemorating. The communicating perspective, then, can be used to examine all operations of pastor and church, perhaps best through the three related aspects of learning, realizing, and celebrating.[103]

Hiltner warns that we cannot separate these aspects of communicating. "It would seem important not to identify communicating with one aspect at the expense of others, but to keep all aspects in mind as provisional subgroupings of the functional goals within the communicating perspective."[104]

As we will see in the more detailed examination of the functional perspective of communicating this subgrouping allows the exploration of new ways of communicating without denying the traditional activities. We will look more closely at these operations at that time. The perspective of organizing focuses upon the organization of the church and the maintenance of the fellowship.

> By this is meant that perspective upon the operations of pastor and church that makes the fellowship cohere and that determines its relationships as a fellowship with everything that is not a fellowship. That is, in the operational sense organizing has two aspects, or perhaps better, two phases. The first is that of centering, or to use our field theory metaphor, that of bringing the field to focus in a human fellowship. The second is influencing or being influenced by the relation of the fellowship, as focus to the field--to the world in all its aspects.[105]

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[103]*Ibid.*, p. 181.   [104]*Ibid.*, p. 60.   [105]*Ibid.*, p. 61.

To Hiltner, the church is not to be considered in the same order as a machine but as a biological entity, the "body of Christ." Considered from the biological point of view Hiltner suggests four facets to this metaphor.[106] (1) A biological entity grows and diminishes by a pattern; (2) while the organs of the body are supportive of each other there is a tension as well; (3) each organ in the body is part of the whole but each one also has its own autonomy; (4) the body is able to adjust to changes in equilibrium and respond by mobilizing resources to fight a threat or challenge.

As with shepherding and communicating, organizing has three aspects, (1) nourishing, feeding or aiding its development; (2) protecting or purifying from threats within or without it; (3) relating it, positively or negatively, to other bodies such as institutions, cultures, or states.[107]

Implicit in this perspective is the understanding that the life of the fellowship functions with an order that can be discerned and studied. A systematic theological perspective may be built on this understanding.

Also, like the other perspectives, organizing is a part of all competent activities of the minister. For whether the direct aim is the shepherding of an injured spirit or the sharing of the good news there will be an impact upon the life and growth of the fellowship.

And so, we can see that Hiltner's model provides a framework

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[106]*Ibid.,* pp. 199-200.   [107]*Ibid.,* p. 201.

which he can place pastoral care in relationship to the total functions of ministry. He is able to preserve the systematic nature of the pastoral act while bringing to bear its theological overtones. Rather than encouraging the dominance or imperialization of counseling in an understanding of pastoral activity he correlates it with a rounded view of the actions called ministry. In this fashion he is able to preserve its wholistic unity while examining a single function.

Hiltner has not been the only voice calling for a function or operation-oriented understanding of ministry. Another researcher has been Allen Moore. Moore's work, primarily unpublished papers and lectures, arises from his interest in Christian education and its relation to pastoral theology and the practice of ministry, and the insights of social science. He seeks an understanding of the practice of ministry that is " . . . both more scientific and more theological."[108]

To bring this kind of clarity to the ministerial role would have two consequences. First, Moore suggests, the task of the pastor has been blurred by no theological basis for understanding the practice.

> It is my belief that alternate models for ministry can only become relevant as they are viewed from the perspective of a theology of ministerial practice. Without a theological point of view for one's practice, the minister becomes a social scientist or some kind of a professional other than what he claims to be. When this happens, the distinctive features of the *profession* of ministry are blurred and its practice may cease to serve the demands of the Christian tradition.[109]

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[108]Moore, "The Place . . . ," p. 14.

[109]*Ibid.*, p. 3.

A solid new concept of ministry can restore the confidence in the task. Second, a restored understanding of ministry would give guidance to developing the goals and methods of theological education. Moore writes, "There continues to be little connection between much of theological education and the needs of the church and the practice of ministry."[110] A clear conception of the nature of ministry would give guidance in preparing men for the practice.

To neglect the study of the ministry is to allow the minister to practice without the kind of guidelines to prevent it from either the compulsive attempt to be relevant by the uncritical adoption of new forms or the depreciation of the profession by overgeneralization or overspecialization.[111]

Moore calls for the development of a practical theology, a discipline which has fallen from sight recently. "Practical theology, as a system of theological inquiry concerned with the nature of the whole ministry and the coordination of the functions has gradually declined in this century."[112]

Such a system would look at ministry from a holistic perspective. The fragmented, compartmentalized, view of ministerial functions--such as the office model--does meet current needs. "The

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[110]Allen J. Moore, "Education for the Practice of Ministry," paper read at the meeting of the Graduate Professors of Christian Education, Dallas, February 5-6, 1968, p. 1.

[111]Moore, "The Place . . . ," pp. 5-6.

[112]Allen J. Moore, "The Role of Religious Education in Theological Education," paper read at the workshop in Religious Education, Association of Seminary Professors in Practical Fields, Brite Divinity School, Fort Worth, June 7-9, 1964.

categorical approach to life, to the ministry, and to the theological

curriculum seems grossly out of date and inadequate when examined

from a holistic and dynamic world view."[113]   Such a view is in concert

with all the social sciences which, Moore claims, are shifting in the

direction of larger wholes and a Gestalt concept of knowledge.[114]

What the holistic view means is that we can see specialization in the

context of the whole of ministry.

As with Hiltner, Moore suggests that a field theory approach

is useful.

> Field theory provides a useful tool for understanding the view
> of ministry which I am proposing . . .   The implication is that
> any number of patterns or configurations for ministry may arise,
> depending upon the situation and the responses which are required.
> The problem is to identify the central viewpoints from which the
> whole ministry might be studied, as well as practiced.[115]

As long as we are able to keep the central perspectives in mind we may

explore any part of the field without losing sight of the context that

provides meaning to the specialized part.

It is from this configuration we can see that the social

sciences can inform the minister but it is not the focus of his

activities. Moore suggests that viewpoints or perspectives will allow

the use of scientific data without overlooking the complexity of the

ministerial act.

> By viewing ministry from viewpoints, one avoids the tendency
> to oversimplify what goes on in an event of ministry. As in all
> human events, the acts of ministry is a complex system of relations

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[113]*Ibid.*, p. 6.   [114]*Ibid.*, p. 3.

[115]Moore, "Education for . . . ," p. 11.

and transactions. Furthermore, viewpoints are positions for empirical reflections in order that operating assumptions can be identified and theological judgments made.[116]

He proposes three viewpoints for seeing ministry.

(1) Communicating--or the articulation and interpretation of the Christian faith in order that it might be heard and realized.
(2) Enabling--or the facetilation of change and health in personal and social systems.
(3) Developing--or the nurture and development of unrealized potential of individuals, organizations, and societies.[117]

The viewpoints parallel the perspectives suggested by Hiltner.

Together with a systematic look at the practice Moore hopes a function-centered theology will grow.

I would define functional theology as a branch of theology concerned with the normative nature of ministry in all of its functions and with the empirical and/or interpretative study of the responses of ministry in the real life situation, resulting in a basic theory of ministering and an increased understanding and articulation of the Christian faith.[118]

Such a theology has seven facets. It is relevant to the culture in which it is found. As a result the pastor's role will be defined operationally in each time in history. It will be solidly grounded in both empirical research and theological insight; all of which will show forth in the application in ministerial action. Functional theology will allow us to see the entire picture of ministry as well as validate operating out of a specialty. Finally, such a theology will

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[116]*Ibid.*, p. 13.

[117]Moore, "The Place of . . . ," p. 14. In an earlier work Moore, whose definition of education is more than learning of tradition, labels the last viewpoint "educating." The description of the viewpoint remains the same.

[118]Moore, "The Role of . . . ," p. 6.

show that the functions of ministry occur with all Christians and not just ordained clergy.

Out of a functional theology Moore envisions the growth of a new type of clergyman.

> The model for the new ministry probably rests in the concept of the *new generalist*. In the old technological age, highly trained specialists who could perform their specialties with competence were required. In the new cybernetic age, there is a need for the generalist who can see the whole, who can think and operate in larger contexts, who can approach a problem from a global point of view and who can innovate and act with expertness. There is no doubt that our times need ministers who can operate in the total electropolis from broad perspectives rather than as narrow specialists or technicians. It requires persons who have intellectual integrity, theological understanding, and an awareness of the human-social situation. The new minister must be equipped to formulate in the light of accelerated change the most appropriate responses of ministry and to practice these responses with professional competence.[119]

Both Moore and Hiltner emphasize the need for a functional view of ministry. Each have sketched the outlines of such a view in a way that suggests the importance of communicating to all activities of the pastor. We turn now to a closer look at the perspective of communicating.

C. A MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS

If we apply the Hiltner and Moore models for understanding the functions of ministry we will, as we noted, integrate a theoretical body of knowledge with a theological body of knowledge and the practice of the art of ministry. And so, as we focus our attention on the

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[119]Moore, "Education for . . . ," pp. 6-7.

functional perspective of communication we take a preliminary look at the nature of communications, the unique features of Christian communication and finally, the way the working pastor encounters communications in his parish.

David Read has, quite correctly, pointed to the current crisis in communication that has affected all of society. "The ability of men and women to understand one another, to commune, to share intimate experience, seems to have shrunk almost proportionately to the expansion of the physical means of communication."[120] This comes at a time, as Read notes, when the world has " . . . the ever-widening gulf between the minority for whom the Christian Gospel is a vital and meaningful factor in their daily lives, and the great majority for whom it has little or no relevance at all."[121] To share the message with those who have not touched its power, to deepen the spiritual resources of the faithful, and, as a community to celebrate the wonder of the gifts perceived by the people of God is a task of significance for churchmen. It is not surprising to hear Hendrik Kraemer say, "Amidst the welter of such questions, engendered by a newly awakened apostolic consciousness, communication has become a problem with which the churches everywhere are wrestling."[122]

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[120]David H. C. Read, *The Communication of the Gospel* (London: SCM Press, 1952), p. 13.

[121]*Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

[122]Hendrik Kraemer, *The Communication of the Christian Faith* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), p. 10.

But, lest we think that communicating is the sole province of the church, we need to be reminded that it is a dimension of all relationships. David Berlo suggests the primacy of communicating, "We interact with other people. Communication is the basis of this interaction, of these relationships between man and man."[123] Each person struggles with his ability to communicate. "Every creative encounter in society involves the mysterious trinity of thought, expression and communication."[124]

It is in communication that man seeks to impart information or persuade others of his perspective. "Communication means imparting something about existence by means of commonly understood relationships, between man and man, man and his environment, or man's environment and environment."[125] Fore sees two implications to this definition. For one, it is increasingly important to consider non-human forms of communication: ". . . the distinctions between strictly human and strictly mechanical communication are diminishing rapidly; therefore, it becomes increasingly important to understand the differences between the two and how they interrelate."[126] The model of communication drawn by Shannon and Weaver which describes the process in

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[123]David K. Berlo, *The Process of Communication* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p. 11.

[124]Read, p. 12.

[125]William F. Fore, "Communication for Churchmen," in B. F. Jackson (ed.) *Communication—Learning for Churchmen* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), p. 28.

[126]*Ibid.*, p. 26.

mathematical terms can be most easily seen in the mechanistic communication relationships. While communication is the basis for human interchange all communication is not between humans. A second implication is that there is change involved.

> Successful communication results in change in the recipient.
> The change may or may not be what the sender intended (if there
> was any intent). The change may result in external behavior,
> or it may not. Communication often takes place without the
> sender's actually being aware of the nature of the change in the
> recipient.[127]

Human communication involves the interaction of beings sharing meaning.
It finds its peak expression in moments of intense awareness.

> There is in the numerous human situation, which are possible
> and which become real, an endless variety of kinds of communica-
> tion. Many of them are superficial and casual, but in most cases
> some kind of mutual contact is sought. Communication achieves
> its real intention when it becomes *rencontre de l'autrui*,
> encounter with the other, a meeting from eye to eye and from
> heart to heart. This ideal encounter, which is the true meaning
> and intended aim of communication, is in fact a rare occurrence
> between men, and a priceless experience.[128]

What happens when the human or the machine communicates? There are a number of factors to consider in framing an answer.

First, we must keep in mind that communications is a dynamic and not a static concept. That is, we are not dealing with a concept that has a fixed set of relationships but one in which the relationship between elements are constantly changing. It is not a situation where the investigator can see the configurations of elements in a single instant. Rather, as Berlo notes, " . . . we must arrest the dynamic of the process, in the same way that we arrest motion when we

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[127]*Ibid.*, p. 27.   [128]Kraemer, p. 58.

take a still picture with a camera."[129] When the process has been

halted for examination we must remember that elements which have pre-

ceded and will follow are not present in our frieze, " . . . we need

constantly to remember that our discussion of a process is incomplete,

with a forced order and possibly a distorted perspective."[130] And so

we need keep in mind that all communicating involves change.

> Seeing communication as a process, we look at it in terms of
> continuous change, not only in the transaction between participants
> but in the transaction within the participants themselves. Com-
> munication viewed as a process is seen as a continuous interplay
> among the elements in the situation--not only between sender and
> receiver but among the successive or simultaneous behaviors of
> each as the process unfolds.[131]

And we must be aware of the limitations of a static analysis of

a dynamic event. We cannot allow ourselves to be misled into thinking

that communication is a transmission from sender to receiver ending at

that point. " . . . What transpires is a process in which the source

and receiver interact more or less imperfectly in arriving at some

degree of common understanding."[132] It might be seen in the imagery

of William Fore, "The whole process of human thinking, imagining,

persuading and moralizing is really an unending conversation that men

carry on with each other and with themselves."[133]

To identify communications as a process is to point to the need to

understand it from a configuration or a model with components that

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[129]Berlo, p. 25.   [130]*Ibid.*, p. 27.

[131]Merrill R. Abbey, *Communication in Pulpit and Parish*
(Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), p. 26.

[132]*Ibid.*, p. 24.   [133]Fore, p. 59.

interact in patterns that can be described.

Some principle or principles of order must be recognized, some
regularities and continuities must be established, some way of
relating an image or word to its wider context must be discovered,
if man is to find meaning in his universe and a way of communica-
ting this meaning to others.[134]

Among the earliest scholars to point to the configurations of

the communication model was Aristotle who urged examination of the

speaker, the speech and the audience. His triad has been a classic

pattern for centuries in analyzing rhetoric. It's basic weakness is

a sequential and fragmented view of the process which does not

delineate the dynamic with which the elements interact.

A major step in communication studies occurred in the late

1940's when Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, working for Bell Tele-

phone Laboratories, suggested a more complex model.

The Shannon-Weaver model deals with five elements of the
communication process: a source from which a message emanates,
a transmitter that encodes the message, a signal that carries
it, a receiver that decodes the message, and a destination to
which the message is directed.[135]

The pivot is the signal which has been encoded and sent on a channel

from the source to a decoder, a receiver and finally a destination.

Disturbances of the signal, termed noise, help reduce the quality of

the signal that is received. In order to help overcome the deterio-

rating effect of noise a duplication or redundancy is built into the

signal. Once a message is transmitted the receiver or the destination

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[134]F. W. Dillistone, *Christianity and Communication* (New York:
Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), p. 26.

[135]Abbey, p. 28.

(if it is a person) may be the source for the next message.

The Shannon-Weaver model is a useful way to analyze the communicating of messages between man and man and man and machine. It is most helpful in understanding the process of mechanical or technological exchange. It is open to quantification and indeed has been termed the "mathematical model" of communications.

David Berlo has proposed a model that has been dubbed the SMCR (Source, Message, Channel, Receiver) model. "Berlo's model is designed for the study of human communication as distinguished from technological communication."[136] As contrasted with Shannon-Weaver, Berlo describes four elements in interaction in the communication process, the source, the message, the channel and the receiver.

Most communication occurs between a source and receiver--a dyadic configuration. The *source* and the receiver interact so as to persuade or inform the other.

> When two people interact, they put themselves into each other's shoes, try to perceive the world as the other person perceives it, try to predict how the other will respond. The goal of interaction is the merger of self and other, a complete ability to anticipate, predict, and behave in accordance with the joint needs of self and other.[137]

The source is the initiator in the communication process. It is his purpose which is expressed in the message. Berlo points out that factors which affect his role include (a) his communication skills, (b) attitudes, (c) knowledge level, and (d) position within a social-cultural system.[138] These factors play a part in the way the message

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[136]*Ibid.*, p. 32.   [137]Berlo, p. 131.   [138]*Ibid.*, p. 41.

is formed.

> In general, message treatment refers to the decisions the
> source makes as to how he should deliver his message, the choices
> he should make with respect to both code and content, and with
> respect to the method of delivering code and content.[139]

The source's images or expectations will be critical in his framing

of a message.

> Every communicator carries around with him an image of his
> receiver. He takes his receiver (as he pictures him to be) into
> account when he produces a message. He anticipates the possible
> responses of his receiver and tries to predict them ahead of
> time. These images affect his own message behaviors.[140]

The message, as Berlo says, can be defined as the decisions

which the communication source makes in selecting and arranging the

codes and content.[141] The message must be phrased in a language or

code that is familiar to both the source and the receiver. Meaning

can only arise in the symbols that are common to all parties in a

communications transaction.

> In the first place, there are no meanings or ideas that are
> not shared with other persons. In the second place, the only
> means we have of communicating involves symbols, and we cannot
> discuss reality except through symbols. In the third place,
> these symbols are events which we create and produce and experi-
> ence as they happen; they are not 'things' in themselves. Fourth,
> enough generalizations occur in our experience to make communi-
> cation possible, but what we agree about has to do with symbols,
> not the 'reality' to which they refer.[142]

With a common system of symbols and a syntax that is understood the

source's purpose can be framed in a message.

The message is conveyed to the receiver by means of a channel.

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[139] *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

[141] *Ibid.*, p. 60.

[140] *Ibid.*, p. 117.

[142] Fore, p. 58.

"Channels couple the source and the receiver, enabling them to com-
municate."[143] The spoken word can be a channel linking the articula-
tion skills of the source with the sensory apparatus of the receiver.
Mass media also function as channels.

The channels are not neutral conveyors of the message. They
affect the message that the receiver perceives in at least two ways.
First the nature of the media selected as a channel shapes the message.
"Not all media can do the same thing; yet we sometimes treat print,
speech, film, and audio as though they were interchangeable."[144] The
message is shaped by the source to fit the channel and, as Marshall
McLuhan points out, the channel carries its own message. The second
channel factor is noise. Noise, as we mentioned earlier, distorts
the quality of a signal. It can reduce the intelligibility of the
message dramatically.

The receiver is the target of the source's message. He must
decode the message in a manner that is faithful to the source's
encoding--if he is to correctly perceive the message. Chances are
though that he will only perceive part of the message sent. "People
tend to organize what they see into patterns which make sense to them.
People tend to fit new material into what they already know."[145] In
his responses the receiver encodes and sends a message back to the
source which indicates how much of the source's purpose was actually
received by the intended recipient. This process is known as feedback.

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[143]Berlo, p. 67.   [144]Fore, p. 48.   [145]*Ibid.*, p. 47.

"Feedback provides the source with information concerning his success in accomplishing his objective. In doing this, it exerts control over future messages which the source encodes."[146]

On one level we may look carefully at the elements which are present in any communication situation such as the amount of information, the capacity of the channel, the adequacy of the coding process and the amount and effect of noise. At a more complex level there are three types of problems, technical, semantic and influential.

> The technical problems are concerned with the accuracy of transference of information from sender to receiver . . . The semantic problems are concerned with the interpretation of meaning by the receiver, as compared with the intended meaning of the sender . . . The problems of influence or effectiveness are concerned with the success with which the meaning conveyed to the receiver leads to the desired conduct of his part.[147]

In the Aristotelian view the elements interacted to inform, persuade or entertain the receiver. And it is certainly the case that most messages do accomplish such tasks. But the communication pattern involves a number of levels of contact.

Merrill Abbey suggests seven levels of communication in his book, *Communication in Pulpit and Parish*.[148] They are patterned by an increasing level of feedback and thus an increasing level of inter-action. At the first level is simple *transmission* in which the source

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[146]Berlo, p. 112.

[147]Warren Weaver, "The Mathematics of Communication," in Alfred G. Smith (ed.) *Communication and Culture* (San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), pp. 15-16.

[148]Abbey, pp. 43-47.

simply funnels data to the receiver with no opportunity for feedback.

The second level is *contact* where the transmitted message is received

by the person or group intended but little or nothing is known by the

receiver of the source and there is no feedback mechanism. At the

third level we allow *feedback* to occur which helps the source shape

future transmissions. A fourth level is one of *comprehension* where

the receiver not only encounters the message but an interactive loop

is established that permits him to question or confirm his understand-

ing of the meaning of the message. The fifth level involves *acceptance*

of the source's point of view through persuasive dialogue. At the

sixth level the message has not only been persuasive but has been

internalized in the actions or attitudes of the receiver. The highest

level is that of *interaction*. At this level there is an interdepend-

ence brought about by mutual understanding and accord. Such an

interaction will eventuate in shared action.

Although we can point to the communication process and the

kinds of interactions that take place we cannot sit back and assume

that communication is a simple or mechanical process. It is always

a struggle for we tend to assume that the distortions will not affect

us and the things we perceive are true to the original intention of

the source.

> The great illusion can be put this way: What we communicate
> is never precisely what we think we communicate. What we say is
> never exactly what people hear. What we hear is not always what
> people say. Yes, some communication takes place each time, but
> ambiguity creeps in. Definitions deceive us. Our perceptions
> and biases fool us.[149]

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[149]Fore, p. 18.

Human interaction will always be an affair with only general accuracy.

The situation will always involve misstatement and misunderstanding.

In this is the problem and the challenge.

> How, then, can we ever hope to communicate between two different individuals, each of whom has his own version of reality? The answer is that we can never hope to communicate perfectly, but we can achieve a reasonable degree of success by means of generalization. When two persons use the same symbol--or word-- long enough so that each can generalize about what it means, then they can go on using the symbol.[150]

For the Christian the process of communicating is given perspective and significance by his faith. Theology informs not only the process but the ground of the entire process. As Abbey notes, "Ministry as we are coming to understand it, is almost synonymous with communication."[151] The depth of that relationship can be seen in the relation between the concept and the central act of Christian worship.

> The word communication comes directly from the Latin communicare, to share or to impart or to partake. It has the same basic meaning as 'communion,' which itself depends for its Christian significance on a double entendre, referring to both the Lord's Supper and an action or situation involving sharing.[152]

Christian theology suggests that the archetype for all human interaction is found in the person's relation to God and the Word of God communicated to man. Man confronts a God of love and care who has revealed himself and his will to man through history and he continues to share with his creatures. "The revelation of God is not a possession at all, but an event. This event happens over and over again as we remember the center of our faith."[153] Though the communication with

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[150]*Ibid.*, p. 55.

[152]Fore, p. 25.

[151]Abbey, p. 15.

[153]*Ibid.*, p. 80.

God is found in the lives of all true believers and speaks with its own authority to the personal world of each Christian, it can be apprehended in the story of God's activities in Jesus of Nazareth and in his suffering, death and resurrection appearances. "Christian witnesses have declared and still declare that in this story all history finds the key to its significance and the pointer to its goal."[154] It is there that the Christian can point to the way God has chosen to communicate and the way man is to communicate. For there they saw the power of love and forgiveness demonstrated. It was God interacting with man in a tangible form.

But it is not only the story that the Christian recalls. It is also the image or picture of the kind of person God became in Christ and the image of the highest potential in humanity. As the first chapter of John suggests the Word of God in the person of Christ had become flesh for all men to see.

Harvey Cox, in the book mentioned earlier, sums it up in this fashion:

> A theology of the means of communication begins not only in the belief that Jesus demonstrates the essential character of human communication. It also begins with the conviction that man is intended to become a communicator. God, the Logos, creates man in His own image. As Paulo Freire says, 'To be a man, a man must say his word.'[155]

Christian thought, therefore, informs the study of communication by suggesting its goal in the image of God as the archetypal

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[154]Dillistone, p. 98.

[155]Harvey Cox, *The Seduction of the Spirit* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), p. 312.

communicator. It suggests the motivation for the communication of the Christian message is in the believer's response to the events of God's activities on his behalf. It also says that the origin of the message that the band of the faithful proclaim is not in the mind or imagination of the human source but in the reality of God. In these ways the faith adds new complexity and new dimensions to the process of communicating.

But theology also has a word to say about the source, message, channel and receiver within the human interaction. F. W. Dillistone points this out as he examines the role of the Christian missionary as a communicator.

> From the beginning Christian missionaries have been compelled to take account of at least four factors.
> 1) The essential message to be communicated.
> 2) The character of the messengers who are the communicators.
> 3) The character of the means and channels of communication available at any particular period of history.
> 4) The relationship between the respective languages of giver and receiver in the process of communication.[156]

The source of Christian communications does not stand alone. He or she is part of a continuing heritage of countless believers who are, and have helped shape the message. It is to this group that God has revealed himself. "In Christian terms, the groupings of selves in and through which persons tend to experience revelation is called the Christian community or the church."[157] Those of us who would speak the word of God must remember our essential link to the church

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[156]Dillistone, pp. 18-22.

[157]Fore, p. 80.

which has been given the word, preserves the tradition, nurtures the memory and the hope and works toward the final goal of God's kingdom for all people.[158]

The Christian source of communication must bring three factors together as he frames the word.

> To wrestle with three histories simultaneously--my own history within its social context, my brother's history within its social context and the history of Jesus the Saviour of mankind within its social context--and there to relate these histories to one another in such a way that a meaningful redemption and a relevant hope begin to be formed: here is a task hard enough to tax the resources of the strongest. Yet nothing less is involved in a comprehensive communication of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.[159]

To speak the time honored word with integrity to a world which cannot see is the job of the Christian. He is to frame that message not only in words or linguistic symbols--but in the very life he leads. The ability of every Christian and of the church to live out the message it proclaims is a constant example to all of the authenticity of the church's word.

The Christian communicator seeks toward two goals. First, he seeks to deepen the relationship *between* his life and the word of God. It is in this relationship that all his actions and activities will reflect the power of that relationship. Second, he seeks to convey a message of hope, forgiveness and love that can be seen in the story and image of Jesus to others within and without the fellowship. By his message he urges the receiver to either begin or deepen the communication between the listener and the source of his being.

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[158]*Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.   [159]Dillistone, pp. 107-108.

> Communication of and communication between must, therefore, be distinguished, yet at the same time be kept together. Well understood, communication of the Christian message, if it achieves its divine end, that is to say, engenders a new creature in Christ, works at the same time in principle the right communication between the right inter-subjectivity.[160]

The "communication of" the message is shaped by a number of factors. For one, it is shaped by whether it is to be aimed at receivers within or without the church. Hiltner suggests, however, that the distinction is not one of process but of style and content.

> The first issue is, then, whether a sharp distinction is to be made between communicating the gospel to those inside as against those outside the faith. Some distinction there certainly is, or there would be no reality to salvation, redemption, and the new being in Jesus Christ. In persons the distinction is decisive. But does the Christian, after he has been made into a new creature absorb and assimilate and learn new depths, aspects and implications of the gospel by communicative processes that are essentially different from those by which he was brought to redemption? If so, then there would be a categorical distinction between 'evangelizing' and 'edifying.' If not, then the distinction concerns quality and value and perhaps specific subject matter, *but not the basic processes of communicating*. It is the contention here that the distinction while decisively important *for persons,* is minor when viewed in the light of the processes of communicating.[161]

F. W. Dillistone suggests that the messages might be organized in one of two ways,

> I suggest that the two fundamental operations belong to the very structure of the world in which we live and that these two operations have become entirely characteristic of man himself. I call these operations Building and Sharing.[162]

In this order messages concern themself either with sharing, edifying or celebrating the story of God's love or they help build the reality of the kingdom through the development and growth of persons

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[160]Kraemer, p. 12.   [161]Hiltner, pp. 179-180.

[162]Dillistone, p. 27.

in the relationship with God, and, the increase of the fellowship by the conversion of those outside the faith. These operations will be seen quite clearly in the three functions of ministry that focus on communications.

Traditionally the church has chosen four ways to make the message known.

It *tells*, i.e. teaches, preaches and announces. It *demonstrates* the message by the quality of its corporate life. It is, or should be, 'a provisional demonstration of God's intention for all people' (Barth). It is a 'sign of the Kingdom.' Christianity should also nourish and *support* whatever signs of the New Humanity, whatever strides toward a restored human community, and whatever 'first fruits of the Kingdom' it finds. They come not just in the 'churchly realm' but in all sectors of the world. The spirit blows where it lists, and the signs of the Kingdom appear where we least expect them. Finally, Christianity *celebrates* the promise of the message and its partial, periodic fulfillment with song and feasting, with dance and stringed instrument.[163]

To make that message known to those outside the community of faith (the "world") the church confronts its paradoxical nature as in the world but not a part of the world. That is, the church must move in the world, speak in the language of the world, but it dare not lose sight of the fact that its reality lies in its relation to God and not in allegiance to any part of the world. This paradoxical relationship has great import when selecting a means or a channel to proclaim the word.

As a channel of communication the church is both proclaimer and distorter of that Word. It is at once required to become involved in the world's techniques and yet is caught up in the distortions which these techniques bring. It is judge of culture, yet is judged by culture.[164]

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[163]Cox, p. 311. [164]Fore, p. 82.

In this light we can see that the church must use techniques available to it from many sources but it must be aware that there are distortions introduced into the message by these techniques. Further, it must be alert lest the distorted message or the technique is elevated to a status of significance or considered to be the "true" gospel.

William Fore points to nine specific ways that the gospel can be distorted,

1. The first distortion is intellectualization.
2. Aestheticism is a distortion which is a counterpart to intellectualization.
3. A third distortion is institutionalism, which is the tendency to substitute a loyalty to the church or any other institution for a loyalty to God.
4. Communication becomes distorted when the Bible is substituted for God as the object of ultimate loyalty and faith.
5. In a Christian setting the substitution of the love of Jesus Christ for the love of God can prevent genuine communication.
6. Communication breaks down when the church cuts itself off from its own tradition.
7. Communication breaks down when we try to allegorize the gospel to make it 'more relevant' but in so doing do violence to its historical roots.
8. Communication is less than Christian when it deals only with the dates of external history--the ideas, names, events, places, and events, when communicated to others from within the context of my personal, internal history, may take on completely different meanings, revealing something to them about ultimate reality.
9. Finally, communication is distorted if it manipulates persons, that is, if it treats persons as things.[165]

In spite of the distortions that will creep into the message the Christian must still struggle to find a way to put the message of hope powerfully before the people of this world. Kraemer first used the concept of a "point of contact" to describe the place where the

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[165]*Ibid.*, p. 84.

church and the world meet.[166] David Read, among many others, has
found the concept useful.

> A message that is true and important, relevant and challenging;
> an organization of tremendous potential power; a people unconvinced,
> apathetic, puzzled. If that picture is accurate then it surely
> bears out the claim that the major problem confronting the church
> today is not the content of the Gospel, nor the machinery of
> evangelism, but the point of contact between the message we know
> to be both true and relevant, and the people to whom for the most
> part it is only partly true and almost wholly irrelevant.[167]

To meet the receiver at a point of contact, is the goal of
seeking a channel to communicate. Once that contact is achieved the
Christian seeks to motivate change in the receiver--but not by manipu-
lation. Rather the clear-cut articulation of the faith opens the
opportunity to the hearer to choose for himself. "The communication
of the church must be to clarify what the world is, what the gospel
is, and how God acts, so that the hearer will be motivated to choose
for or against this good news in the context of the real world."[168]
To seek to manipulate the hearer to uncritical acceptance of the faith
would be to deny the basic dignity of the receiver. But if the gospel
is truly spoken in a way that is relevant to the needs of mankind,
something will happen.

> Behind all our specific ideas on communicating the gospel
> there is the assumption that, if it is communicated (received and
> assimilated), something happens. Just because the gospel deals
> with saving truth about that which is most deeply important, the
> receiver of it can never remain unaffected by it.[169]

This conviction embraces this assumption because he can clearly see

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[166]Kraemer.

[167]Read, p. 27.

[168]Fore, p. 98.

[169]Hiltner, p. 177.

that the real basis for communication is the power of the Spirit. It

is the Spirit of God which is the source and the sustainer and the end

of the communication process for the man of faith.

> . . . If the Christian Doctrine of the Spirit has any validity
> at all, it means that the Holy Spirit is constantly working in the
> world to bring about a more effective communication and a more
> penetrating apprehension of the Image and Word of God: it means,
> too, that those who are seeking, in all sincerity and with all
> patience, to engage in the work of communication can be assured
> of the assistance of the Holy Spirit whose joy it is to take of
> the things of Christ and reveal them unto men.[170]

To communicate is integral to the life of every Christian. But

it also stands as a central objective of the professional Christian

leader. "To enable persons to communicate more freely is a prime

objective of the healing and helping professions."[171]

The study of the process of communicating and the insights of

theology are finally integrated in the practice or acts of ministry.

A number of specific activities group themselves into the communication

perspective on ministry. Fore suggests four general categories: 1)

imparting information, 2) teaching skills, 3) modifying attitudes or

opinions, and motivating persons to take action.[172] Hiltner limits it

to there by suggesting that motivating to action is a function of the

ordering or developing function. He suggests a triad of traditional

functions.

> For those inside the faith the tradition noted instruction,
> edifying (deepening), and celebrating. For them instruction
> clarified, edifying deepened or made more real, and celebration
> reminded. If we make the terms more general, we can see that

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[170]Dillistone, p. 144.   [171]Abbey, p. 16.

[172]Fore, p. 239.

learning and deepening (or realizing or absorbing or assimi-
lating) apply to those both outside as well as inside the faith
in terms of process, if they will attend at all. Celebrating as
re-minding can apply only to those who have been somewhere first.
But participation with those who are being re-minded may be a
means of communicating even to those not in the faith. In this
sense, therefore, even celebrating may be said to have a communi-
cative function to both those outside and those inside the
faith.[173]

There is an often misunderstood relationship between education
and communication. Fore makes two points about it.

First, communication is more inclusive than education. That
is, all education is communication, but not all communication is
education. Second, education has a different goal from communi-
cation, or, more precisely, it has an additional goal. The basic
goal of human communication is to have the message which is
received correspond as closely as possible to the message intended.
All other goals derive from this one. The basic goal of education
is communication which educators believe to be desirable. This
concept of 'desirability' conditions all education.[174]

Christian education involves the transmission of words, images
and information to develop within the receiver an understanding of the
faith or the life of faith that he did not previously have.

. . . Christian education must help man understand the ways
in which he is manipulated by the myths, symbols, and rituals of
the group of which he is a part, and also help him understand the
extent to which he must depend upon these myths, symbols, and
rituals to provide him with emotional security, to revalidate his
earlier insights, and to give him a set of relationships for use
in communicating with others.[175]

In the building of new awareness and new ways of living Christian
education is a vital part of the minister's duties.

For the same reasons that communication in general faces a
crisis the field of education is in crisis and redefinition. Allen

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[173]Hiltner, p. 181.   [174]Fore, pp. 70-71.

[175]*Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.

Moore suggests that this is primarily due to technology's impact on mankind.[176] He suggests that the future of this function will be marked by decreasing dependence on traditional institutional forms of the church for the source of Christian teaching. Increasingly, Moore feels, ecumenical groupings will replace the denominational forms and from this will arise a new model of the church as a communications center.

> The church as a communication center may best be described as a happening or as a medium. Something of significance is taking place. It provides opportunity for community celebrations and festive occasions in which the world joins the 'Christians' in dancing, singing and even in worshipping together. The present provincialism of the Christian church will be broken down as it comes to be located in the market place.[177]

Such changes will certainly be devastating to men not ready to cope with rapid change. So Moore argues, "The future role of religious education is to prepare men to be open to the future, to affirm it as God's gift, and to assume the responsibility for God's mission in the coming new age."[178]

Education is the preparing and initiating of persons into the new reality of the life of faith. Edifying relates to the support and nurture of the faithful and leads them into a deeper appreciation of the faith.

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[176]Allen J. Moore, "The Future of Religious Education," paper read at the Convocation on Christian Education, April 25-27, 1968, Long Beach, CA, and abridged for the Southern California-Arizona United Methodist Board of Education, October 11-12, 1968, p. 3.

[177]*Ibid.*, p. 7.   [178]*Ibid.*, p. 5.

> Realizing or deepening becomes the recognition of new, deeper, or broader meaning to that which has been known or possessed previously. Realizing or deepening becomes the recognition of new, deeper, or broader meaning to that which has been known or possessed before. And celebrating is realizing or assimilating that becomes deeper not through new ideas or the perception of new connections, but through corporate acknowledging.[179]

The pastor is charged with the development of a community that encourages the life-long growth of each member in the depth of faithful response to God's love.

The Church does not stop there. As we noted in an earlier reference, Hiltner points to the place in the life of faith for the remembering and reminding of the way God's love has been shared with us. Celebrating is a re-acknowledgment of the basic relationship between God and man.

Celebrating is the externalizing through ritual or art of the communion of God with man. Though it can be seen in the works of perceptive artists sensing the mechanisms which hold creation together. Celebration is also the central act of the church affirming the mystery of grace and salvation. Corporate worship and the celebration of the sacraments are moments of high communication.

> For those of us who are Christians this close relationship between communication and the central act of Christian worship is not an accident of linguistics. It represents the historic centrality of effective communication in effective Christianity.[180]

The functions of the Christian pastor include the expression of celebration by the act of corporate worship and the nurturing of expressive forms in the life of the people.

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[179] Hiltner, p. 182.   [180] Fore, p. 25.

In this chapter we have looked at the need to respond to the crisis of the ministry by providing a role definition that is relevant to the practice of ministry today. After exploring some historic role images we developed a function-oriented model of the pastoral functions that allowed the demands of theology to be integrated with the disciplines of social science and the practice of ministry.

In order to explore the meaning of this model we turned to one functional perspective, "communicating" and examined it from the point of view of the study of communications, from the insights of theology and finally from those practices that are specifically communication oriented.

In the next chapter we will look at the way one form of communication, the motion picture, can be used in a ministry of communications.

CHAPTER II

FILM AS AN ACT OF MINISTRY

In the previous section we noted the function of communication

that is the responsibility of every Christian and every Christian

pastor. Paul Tillich speaks of the message of the church in this way,

> The Christian message is the message of a new Reality in which
> we can participate and which gives us the power to take anxiety
> and despair upon ourselves. *And this we must, and this we can
> communicate.*[1]

We have seen that the act of communicating the message involves

the synthesis of the message with a process of communication that is

supportive of Christian values. One implication of this is that the

Christian communicator holds in high regard the need for each person to

be confronted by the power of the message and retain the freedom to

decide for himself whether to accept that message or not. Manipulation

cannot be a part of the process.

> To communicate the Gospel means putting it before the people
> so that they are able to decide for or against it. The Christian
> Gospel is a matter of decision. It is to be accepted or rejected.
> All that we who communicate this Gospel can do is to make possible
> a genuine decision. Such a decision is one based on understanding
> and on partial participation.[2]

As Tillich notes the Christian must initiate a process through

which the receiver can sense that the particular concerns of his life

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[1]Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 208.

[2]*Ibid.*, p. 201.

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are understood and appreciated by the Christian and that the communicator's answer speaks directly to that problem. "The first thing we must do is to communicate the gospel as a message of man understanding his own predicament."[3] And, as the theologian goes on to say, "We can speak to people only if we participate in their concern, not by condescension, but by sharing in it. We can point to the Christian answer only if, on the other hand, we are not identical with them."[4]

So the first task of the Christian is to be open and aware of the predicament of mankind and sensitive to the ways in which his people live. Yet he cannot be a part of it in a way that he loses the perspective of faith and loses the concern with the ultimate. To do that would be to abandon the hope and be lost in the very problem of anxiety and despair that the Christian message speaks to.

Where are people today? What forces are shaping and molding mankind and thus shaping the message the Christian minister proclaims? The people are living in what Allen Moore describes as "Electropolis"-- "an electric, cybernetic, dynamic social system."

> What this suggests is that man no longer lives in just one city or even in a regional metropolis. His home is the universe --a global city in which the whole human enterprise is linked together in one environmental system. Each of us is becoming plugged into the whole human race with all its past, present, and future.[5]

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[3]*Ibid.*, p. 203.   [4]*Ibid.*, p. 207.

[5]Allen J. Moore, "The Future of Religious Education," paper read at the Convocation on Christian Education, April 25-27, 1968, Long Beach, CA, and abridged for the Southern California-Arizona United Methodist Board of Education, October 11-12, 1968, p. 3.

Electropolis is characterized by the mass mind, mass culture, electronic simultaneity. The individual receiver cannot help but be bombarded by the forces that mold him into the "mass man." Certainly the most visible factors shaping the consciousness of the person are the devices of our communications technology--radio, television, the computer and the motion picture.

Ross Snyder, speaking to a group of professional broadcasters, emphasized their role and responsibility in shaping mankind's world. "I choose to think of the people who program television, movies, and radio, as architects. Architects of the meaningful space in which contemporary man will live and move and have his being."[6] He continues by pointing to the new "habitat" or world of personal meaning that the media are creating.

> Every person must find and help create his habitat--else he is anxiously alone and defective. A new consciousness and a new habitat for man is being formed by electronic communications-- man's brain is being connected with the world in a new way. New modes of communication reshape the human mind. New qualities and powers of consciousness emerge with electronic communication. Via electronic communications the human brain is now being attached to the world in a new way.
> The human brain is molded by the flood of incoming stimuli to resemble the world it has been privileged (and often damnably sentenced to perceive). The quality, taste, design of the communi- cated world structures the quality, taste, patterns of his con- sciousness. . . . man's mind and emotions are no longer basically attached to the world of nature, but to the 'soft ground' of people --their inner world and their history-making.[7]

The electronic media have impact upon our psyche in ways that

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[6]Ross Snyder, "Architects of Man's Consciousness," unpublished paper read at an APBE Convention, Chicago, 1966, p. 1.

[7]*Ibid.*

the communicator needs to realize if he is able to sense the kind of

people his message is addressed to.

> Conditioned by film and television, people alter their recep-
> tion of all messages. The youth who has viewed 16,000 hours of
> electric media programming does not bring to the classroom or
> church service the same kind of mind as did his counterpart of an
> earlier generation. A communicative ministry, in order to reach
> him, must learn the perceptual language that the new media have
> evolved. For electric media erect new barriers to communication
> even as they bestow new aids in winging the message.[8]

Merrill Abbey sketches three factors that are present in the

mind and perception of the media-sated individual.

> Whatever his medium, the communicator deals with persons whose
> responses are conditioned by these effects of the baring of the
> central nervous system. Of three results, present in every
> receiver, the skilled communicator must be aware: (a) He lives
> immersed in all-at-onceness and comes to any communication already
> full of impressions, frustrations, and information (which may be
> misinformation because it seems complete despite its fragmenta-
> tion). (b) He survives the experience only because he is largely
> numbed, and the apathy thus produced may become a social and
> spiritual problem. (c) He knows best how to deal with communica-
> tions that come to him in a 'cool' form (a form that involves him
> in the completion of the message).[9]

But the effects of mass media also affect all of society

shaping the way men and women relate to each other.

> It is essential that we realize we are all being conditioned,
> educated, influenced and acted upon, continuously, by the media
> of mass communication. All media are 'message' media, moulding
> our thought and action patterns--particularly when we are unaware
> of the on-going process.[10]

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[8]Merrill R. Abbey, *Communication in Pulpit and Parish*
(Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), p. 68.

[9]*Ibid.*, p. 71.

[10]Malcolm Boyd, *Crisis in Communications* (Garden City: Double-
day, 1957), p. 47.

Every time we see a television show or view a film we have--whether we appreciate it or not--made judgments of value and encountered a statement of the filmmaker's values.

> Every perception has built into it an implicit judgment and feeling attitude toward what we are encountering. Feeling and judgment of what something intends toward us are not added on to but are a quality of each perception. Our fleeting seeings coalesce into a sensing of the kind of person that is before us, combined with liking or not-liking him. Or more accurately, the major content of any television show is images produced in the listener of the possibilities of human life.[11]

Our media tend to lull us into an easygoing state with our critical awareness low. They are often like masks which hide the truth of our values and lure us toward the unthought acceptance of another set of values and meaning. Yet if we look at the message that is there all along we are often startled by what is revealed.

> As Bertholt Brecht once said, 'Give a man a mask, and he'll tell you the truth.' Man's 'masks' today are his movies and his clothes styles, his advertising art and his jet plane fuselages. Admittedly he deceives himself with them, hides and distorts and mystifies. But in his very masking of himself he reveals more about his gods and himself than he ever suspects.[12]

While there is great power in the media's ability to share values with us there is also great ambiguity. For the media themselves can be seen as of positive or negative value. There can be no uncritical embracing of the media by the Christian because these channels have the potential of creating a new climate and a new humanity--or they can be destructive of those values the Christian

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[11]Snyder, p. 6.

[12]Harvey Cox, *The Seduction of the Spirit* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), p. 271.

espouses.

> The mass media can have two opposite effects on man. They can open up his world, by extending his eyes and ears to take in a wide range of information not otherwise available. TV, radio and the press in this sense become what Marshall McLuhan calls 'extensions of man.' This is *open communication*. Yet the same media can constrict and distort man's world so that he becomes less, rather than more, of a person. The cliché analysis, the formula drama, the ten-second 'news' report, the repetitious and insulting advertising claim, the misleading headline, the emotional picture and sensationalized report--all these tend to cut man off from reality rather than to relate him to it. This is *closed communication*.[13]

The media have the power to bring a new power to enrich the way we live. One way of thinking of this is that there is an immediacy and a presence to the film or TV image that presents the face of humankind in a vivid manner.

> . . . Television brings a strange new kind of face to face communication. A new kind of presence. 'Presence' is what the person has turned on the television set to find. He turns on the set not primarily for information or even entertainment. Rather he wants a cure for his loneliness; and a sensing that the world is still in touch with him. He wants a vivid human being right there before him. Not just their surface, but the struggling, enjoying part of them. That's what presence is.[14]

In an instant the television image can put us in touch with people geographically distant. The film can delve and expose the roots that nurture men in all nations. All events become world events. There are no "private" happenings. "By its very nature mass communication is toward a world ecumene. Hopefully it might become of the world household."[15]

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[13]William F. Fore, *Image and Impact* (New York: Friendship Press, 1970), p. 14.

[14]Snyder, p. 7.   [15]*Ibid.*, p. 2.

Bringing us together can, as Kyle Haselden suggests, have a number of implications.

> First, by their saturation of the whole country, the mass media will have a universalizing effect on our culture and society. . . . Second, the mass media have a liberating effect on the masses of the people, freeing them especially from prisons of ignorance. . . . I suspect in the third place that mass media will have an integrating effect on our society and perhaps eventually on the world.[16]

By providing ways of transmitting messages to this new "village" a new pattern of instant or near instant exchange of information occurs. There is no technical reason why feedback loops may not be created for the receiver to communicate directly with the media producer. "The electronic media could, given the needed changes in control and technology, facilitate a more democratic and more participatory society than we now have. Print cannot."[17] In fact, William Fore suggests, that communication via the channels of the mass media are more democratic than many person-to-person forms.[18]

The media bring the world closer together in geographical distance. They also bring us closer together in time. By their dramatic immediacy resulting from the greater amount of information (both audio and visual), and the near instantaneous time for transmission, the media present the viewer with world history as it is

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[16]Kyle Haselden, Morality and the Mass Media (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1968), pp. 66, 68, 70.

[17]Cox, p. 277.

[18]William F. Fore, "Communication for Churchmen," in B. F. Jackson (ed.) Communication--Learning for Churchmen (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), p. 85.

being lived.

> History is no longer a something we read about in textbooks, but what we are living 'in.' It isn't just that we 'know' that something is happening. Because of the peculiar immediacy of the sound-seeing image coming through the television screen, we are present in it. Now we have the instrument par excellence of communicating the news event in its full actuality and the same day and instant it is happening. Radio and television influence public opinion the instant it is being formed. For always within the presentation itself is an interpretation of the meaning of that event. But not only to present the news, but to enable the citizen to make sense of that news, is the big possibility of broadcasting.[19]

The mass media bear the power not only to tell us about an event but to put us there in a powerfully realistic way. The "lived moment," to borrow a phrase from Snyder, puts us in a new way into the history of mankind. "Man is a constituting consciousness that goes on from there. We expose people to the actual instead of telling them about it."[20]

We can, therefore, point to the power of the media to open our lives to new dimensions of caring and sharing. It can help us become more vividly a part of life. It can also have its limitations and drawbacks. It can dehumanize as well as humanize mankind. The media, by its relentless exposure as well as the commercial structure it operates within, can be destructive of patterns of human meaning and relationship.

Mankind may not be ready to cope with either the speed of communication or the amount of information that deluges it. To live simultaneously with events of history is to reduce the time for us to

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[19]Snyder, pp. 2-3. [20]*Ibid.*, p. 6.

integrate the fact into our lives before formulating responses. We

lose perspective on the meaning of these happenings and with perspective

missing our responses tend to be superficial. But also by the constant

glare of the media's hungry eye the vast gulf between rich and poor,

developed and underdeveloped nations narrows. Images and life styles

not appropriate to a people may become part of the every day viewing

habits. The expectations of a people change under such conditions and

with that change comes changes in the way the people relate.

Perhaps most destructive is the ability of the media to lull

and bypass our abilities to reason.

> In content, the mass media's most dangerous quality is the
> ability to subvert man's reason. There are two explanations.
> First, to reach and hold an audience the media must essentially
> entertain people, which requires entertainment on as broad and
> common a level as possible. The second reason why mass media
> systematically subvert man's reason is their out-and-out selling
> function.[21]

The power of the media to embrace our senses leaves the viewer

open to commercial exploitation by the producers. To exploit the

viewer is, essentially, to treat him as an object for manipulation.

> Mass media are being employed to treat members of the mass
> audience as 'objects' and not as 'persons' who are known in
> 'relationship' or 'meeting.' Empathy is achieving a bastardizing
> kind of 'personal' communication for general purposes of exploita-
> tion. 'Personal' communication does not necessarily issue in what
> we call 'meeting' between two 'persons.' We must distinguish
> between a demonic distortion of 'personal' communication and
> Christian 'personal' communication. The latter is grounded in
> the faith that the two 'persons' communicating are doing so in the
> mutual experience and power of God the Holy Spirit, as sons of God
> equal in His sight, and as having been redeemed by the saving
> action of Jesus Christ.[22]

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[21]Fore, *Image and Impact,* p. 48.

[22]Boyd, p. 34.

Rather than filling the need of people for a deeper form of communication the media leads to the purchase of soap. The trust of the viewer has been exploited for commercial gain.

When reason is bypassed, another dynamic is set in motion which is potentially harmful. "The media, designed to reach the broadest possible audience, thus discourages consumers from having strong feelings about anything important."[23] The "mass man" is caught in the blandness of the "mass mind."

> They argue on behalf of a generalized middle class ethic which will enable us to get through the tense, troubled, and crowded sixties. What television says--and says again and again--is: Be tolerant; try to understand the other fellow; accept your own limitations and the limitations of other people. It doesn't countenance extravagant or self-indulgent action. What society requires, TV seems to say, is not visionaries or heroes or saints but sensible, moderate people, their neuroses firmly under control. In other words, television teaches us not so much how to live but how to put up with the lives we have to live.[24]

We can clearly see that the mass media are mixed blessings. The great ambiguity of this powerful part of our society leaves thoughtful Christians wondering if the church can ever make use of such a potentially destructive tool to share its word. Surely all of those in the fellowship would urge the church to avoid exploitation at any cost. As Malcolm Boyd puts it, "It seems that the Church must play a dual role, speaking out against studied and highly developed exploitation of human beings, and, also, abstaining itself from such exploitation."[25]

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[23]Cox, p. 304.

[24]David Boroff, "Television and the Problem Play," in Patrick D. Hazard (ed.) *TV as Art* (Champaign, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1966), p. 100.

[25]Boyd, p. 35.

I propose that churchmen do not reject the media but, rather, seek methods of becoming critically aware of the potential for good and ill that the media brings and doing all we can to maximize the good. The power and the pervasiveness of the media put new demands on Christians and all citizens.

> We Christians have not even begun to plumb the depth of our involvement with the mass media. Unbelievable naiveté best describes our reaction to the robot-like techniques and gadgets that are pushing our lives around--and no one's life is excepted.[26]

It is the responsibility of the church to seek to develop ways of exposing and enlightening members to the ways the media affects their lives. Growth in our perception of nature and role of the mass media helps us control the destructive side of these powerful devices.

> Life is full of distortions. So long as there have been men communicating there has been manipulation. But this is not a valid reason for avoiding an examination of communication. On the contrary, it is the main argument in favor of understanding media. *Understanding is the key to avoiding their tyranny.*[27]

To understand the media is to interact creatively with its language. It is to appreciate the way the media itself functions and communicates. And it means that we become able to make judgments regarding the values communicated to us and the forces shaping us. It is the responsibility of each Christian to become a media critic.

Fore speaks of the development of such a critical stance in three steps.

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[26]*Ibid.*, p. 16.

[27]Fore, *Image and Impact*, p. 9.

How can we develop the critical stance toward communication needed? The first step is to understand technology, and all of culture, as consisting of elements which condition our ability to communicate and which thus modify both our perception of the world and our ability to relate to it . . .

A second step is to build into each aspect of communication sufficient feedback loops so that we know what is happening, can evaluate it in terms of human goals, and can thus shape communication to human ends. . .

A third step in avoiding the dangers of overcommunication is to maintain a diversity of communication within the culture.[28]

In the previous chapter we spoke of the church as a communications center. Here we see the need for the church to join with other groups in society--such as the schools and art institutions--in providing quality education in the impact and promise of the mass media in all its forms. John Tebbel writes,

. . . we must now begin to train people in the visual and aural absorption of knowledge and teach them how to relate what they see and hear to what they read, for there is no reason to believe, as some communications extremists contend, that the printed word will be obsolete.[29]

It is only in a critically aware Christian community that criteria can develop which will allow definitive judgments on the use or non-use of the devices we possess to communicate.

There are those who would argue that the only stance the church should adopt in relation to the media is rejection or avoidance. But this we cannot do.

We cannot disengage ourselves, as Christians, from the mass media themselves or from the problems with which they challenge us. This is true for two main reasons. First, our missionary

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[28]Fore, "Communication for Churchmen," pp. 66, 67, 68.

[29]John Tebbel, "The Making of a President: Politics and Mass Communication in America," in Hazard, p. 34.

imperative commands us to preach the Gospel to all men. How can we, in the face of our Lord's will, refuse to use such potentially vital methods as mass media in reaching out with God's Word to desperately isolated men and women? Secondly, it is increasingly becoming obvious that we are being evangelized by our secular technical society far more than we are in the process of evangelizing it for Jesus Christ. The Church's manifest task is to evangelize this society and age and condition.[30]

Rather we must turn to the media to look for the ways they can help us share the message. Halford Luccock relates this mandate to the Psalmist.

All through the Psalms there runs the plea to praise the Lord on all kinds of instruments, the harp, the lyre, all that there were. That plea must include the magical instruments of our day. There is need for new musical instruments for the music of the gospel.[31]

If we take these calls seriously we *must* become creatively involved with the motion picture.

Motion pictures and television, the most characteristic art forms of the twentieth century, maybe the best spokesmen for men in our own age, offering us the liveliest opportunities for listening to the self-expressions of those to whom we want to direct our message of faith.[32]

One aspect, then, of our responsibility to become critical about media is to become critically involved with the motion picture.

Therefore, the church has an extraordinary responsibility to its people to educate for cinematic experience. What is needed is not primarily some dogmatic apparatus that will reassure churchmen that such and such a film is 'safe.' The church of the future will simply refuse to believe such data. What is needed is a new sense of style and discrimination that will enable the church

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[30]Boyd, p. 23.

[31]Halford E. Luccock, *Communicating the Gospel* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), p. 18.

[32]G. William Jones, *Sunday Night at the Movies* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1967), p. 14.

adequately to apprehend and criticize the film. Unless the church can educate its people to the issues of discrimination in film experience, it will have nothing to say to its people in regard to the dominant mode of communication of ideas and values. If the latter is the case, then an entire section of contemporary human social experience will be untouched by the reflection of the church. The important question, then, is not 'Shall the church involve itself in the film?' but 'How shall it involve itself in the film?'[33]

The motion picture has been in the public eye for over seventy years now. During that history the church has related to it in a number of ways. Our image of that relationship has been what Jim Wall points to as a confrontation.

For many years—and even today for a minority of American churchgoers—the words 'church and cinema' have suggested 'church vs cinema.' Familiar images personifying the hostility of the church to Hollywood are those of the irate pastor storming the box office to stop the showing of a 'dirty movie,' and of the more august Roman Catholic Legion of Decency condemning a picture and bringing an entire industry to its knees in fear.[34]

But these images—while they have some facts to support them—are too simple to explain the church's attitude to moving pictures. William Jones has provided a brief look at the history of this relationship in his book *Sunday Night at the Movies*.[35] He begins by pointing out, "The church and the screen have been friends longer than they have been enemies."[36] From as early as 1898 churches were developing and using filmed versions of classic Christian works such

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[33]F. Thomas Trotter, "The Church Moves Toward Film Discrimination," *Religion in Life* (Summer 1969), quoted in Robert G. Konzelman, *Marquee Ministry* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), pp. 12-13.

[34]James M. Wall, *Church and Cinema* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), p. 11.

[35]Jones, pp. 25-37.

[36]*Ibid.*, p. 25.

as *Ben Hur* and *Quo Vadis* and re-creations of biblical stories. By

1920, "The motion picture had been firmly established as a vital part

of the life of church members, both within and outside the walls of

their meeting places."[37]

By the time the 30's had arrived the content of films had

become more and more risqué since the box office responded to that

genre. With that trend the church became increasingly suspicious of

the motion picture with any but overtly religious subjects.

> In 1933, the Roman Catholic cardinal of Philadelphia forbade
> all Catholics of that city to attend any of the motion picture
> palaces, and the following year saw the formation of American
> Catholicism's Legion of Decency, a film-classifying organization
> which received large support from Protestant and Jewish groups.[38]

This group later became the National Catholic Office for Motion

Pictures and still today exerts influence upon the viewing habits of

faithful members of that communion. The Motion Picture Code which for

two decades ruled the content of motion pictures was a result of the

diligent efforts of this group--and its enforcement was largely due to

the follow-up efforts of the NCOMP and the Legion of Decency.[39]

Martin Quigley, a supporter of the Legion of Decency and a

co-author of the Motion Picture Code, published a work defending his

stance. Titled, *Decency in Motion Pictures*, it suggests that the motion

picture is unique in the communications spectrum for three reasons, it

has a larger circulation than other media, its impact is more vivid,

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[37]*Ibid.*

[38]*Ibid.*, p. 27.

[39]Richard S. Randall, *Censorship of the Movies* (Madison:
University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), p. 186.

and, consequently it has a great facility to convey in thought and emotional stimulus a shocking message.[40] He suggests that we err to consider any art form as the vehicle to the plain truth.

> The function of art is certainly not that of a tattle-tale columnist--to tell everything about everybody. Mankind is not lacking in knowledge of human frailties; its lack is only in capacity to avoid the exceedingly well-known frailties.[41]

The artist, in Quigley's view, is to be exceedingly selective of the content he chooses to treat in his work. Such work shall not debase mankind since, " . . . its higher purpose consists of the presentation and encouragement of right ideals and right conduct in life and living."[42] It is the responsibility of the critic to weigh the overall effect of presentation of evil in the motion picture to see that the end audience reaction will not amount to an " . . . invasion of the ideas and ideals of morality which the audience entertains."[43]

Quigley's narrow paternalism was backed in the marketplace by the persuasive power of the Legion of Decency and later the NCOMP so that pictures that were designated unfit saw a lower box office return than the acceptable pictures.[44] The Motion Picture Code--reflecting the notions of morality expressed by the Legion--clamped an iron hand of self-regulation on the industry at the production rather than the

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[40]Martin Quigley, *Decency in Motion Pictures* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), p. 5.

[41]*Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.   [42]*Ibid.*, p. 10.

[43]*Ibid.*, p. 11.   [44]Randall, p. 194.

distribution end. The result in the content and style of motion

pictures produced during the Code years is a bland diet where contro-

versial or even realistic presentations were not seen.

Powerful as it was, the Legion of Decency approach of condemn-

ing the media did not entirely rule the day--though its impact was

profound. Says Jones,

> Thus, by the early 30's the church in the United States had
> formed an ambivalent attitude toward the motion picture which
> persists largely to the present--an attitude which accepts
> uncritically the 'religious' productions of secular and church
> organizations, but ignores 'secular' films except when it takes
> up cudgels to beat those films which have dealt too plainly with
> sex or exposed too much female anatomy.[45]

It should come as no surprise that such an attitude cannot withstand

the test of time.

> This 30 year-old attitude is proving itself to be increasingly
> more self-contradictory, irrelevant and untenable today because of
> the rise in the last two decades of a brand of secular film which,
> in its thoroughgoing realism, bids fair to outdo the majority of
> religious films in presenting the gospel--the truth about life.
> These films also offer the church as almost unprecedentedly
> effective means of listening to the self-expression of contemporary
> man.[46]

Today the Christian pastor often welcomes the film as a tool

to aid him in interpreting life to the members of his congregation--a

trend we welcome. Jones concludes by suggesting,

> If the church is beginning to wake up and take more serious
> notice of the motion picture (and television), then perhaps it is
> time to think seriously about possible standards for responsible
> and creative criticism, on the part of Christians, or both our
> own and others' screen productions.[47]

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[45]Jones, pp. 27-28. [46]*Ibid.*, p. 28. [47]*Ibid.*, p. 37.

If we are to communicate God's word to a people who live in electropolis we cannot overlook the film. To quote William Jones once more,

> There are several reasons why responsible persons of the twentieth century can no longer afford to continue having a superficial attitude toward the screen. One reason is that television and the motion pictures are slowly and fragmentarily --but constantly--moving from being mere 'screen media' of entertainment and advertising toward being the 'screen arts.' If they are to succeed in their push toward maturity, these newest arts of mankind need a public which receives and criticizes them as art. The screen needs viewers who expect artistic quality from the screen and then applaud or protest on an artistic basis . . .
> A second reason why viewers need to understand something of the process of screen production is so they may become aware of the exact content and purpose of the screen communications which are directed toward them . . .
> A third reason applying to those seeking to be responsible Christians in their attitude toward the screen is that the 'people of God' have a mandate to become discriminating and aware in their approach to the screen arts. Our claim to be the 'children of God' demands it.[48]

The Christian pastor who would effectively embrace the role of communicator must take account of film and the way it affects and helps his performance of the activities of ministry. So we may return to the model suggested in the previous chapter and examine the way the art and science of film can be integral tools for performing ministry.

Utilizing that model we will sketch the outlines of a theory of how film achieves the goals of communication. We then examine these ideas in light of the insights of Christian theology. Finally we look at the possibilities of film in the activities of edification, education and celebration.

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[48]*Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

The film experience is a complex and many faceted situation. Without involving volumes we can only skim the surface of the way in which it communicates the message from the filmmaker to the viewer.

I suggest three basic mechanisms by which the film speaks. First, it creates symbols derived from the exploration of the concrete surface of reality. Secondly, it organizes and relates these symbols in patterns of meaning. Finally, it suggests images which offer the receiver a wholistic pattern or attitude.[49]

Siegfried Kracauer in his classic *Theory of Film* points to the kinship of motion pictures with photography.

> What is of the essence in film no less than photography is the intervention of the film maker's formative energies in all the dimensions which the medium has come to cover. He may feature his impressions of this or that segment of physical existence in documentary fashion, transfer hallucinations and mental images to the screen, indulge in the rendering of rhythmical patterns, narrate a human-interest story, and so on. All these creative efforts are in keeping with the cinematic approach as long as they benefit, in some way or other, the medium's substantive concern with our visible world. As in photography, everything depends on the 'right' balance between the realistic tendency and the formative tendency; and the two tendencies are well balanced if the latter does not try to overwhelm the former but eventually follows its lead.[50]

He suggests that the motion picture can only deal with the surface of the physical world. This is the basic starting point and all non-physical messages are revealed through the reproduction of physical.

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[49]While this is similar to John Hosper's aesthetic categories of surface, significant form and life value it is not built on it. Rather it is an attempt to explain the basic mechanisms by which communication--aesthetic or otherwise--in film is achieved.

[50]Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film* (New York: Oxford Press, 1960), cited in Richard Dyer MacCann, *Film* (New York: Dutton, 1966), pp. 248-249.

Bela Balázs, the Hungarian critic, suggests something similar when he points to the *"Der Sichtbare Mensch"* (the face of man).[51] Balázs notes that the silent film is highly dependent upon the close-up. In the face of man can be seen dimensions not possible to reveal in other ways. The height of the visual art lies in the capturing of the face of the world by the camera.

The film, however, does not reproduce reality in an exact manner. The technical process of capturing images on film introduces distortions which cannot be avoided.

Perhaps most basic is the fact that film (as we normally experience it) is the capturing of images of a three-dimensional physical reality on a two-dimensional surface. Depth is the missing dimension which the filmmaker can simulate through movement, or light or angle, or, if it suits his purposes he may choose--as occasionally is found in the animated film--to present an image without depth.

The camera is set at a particular position and the angle affects the image presented. The cameraman has the need to choose angles which help him convey what he wishes to convey about the object. He may choose to speed-up a long process--as in time-lapse sequences-- or slow down a process as in slow-motion photography.

The list could go on and on. We distort by the colors or lack of color reproduced, the lighting, perspective changes, camera movement, and so on.

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[51] Bela Balázs, *Theory of the Film* (New York: Dover, 1970), p. 39.

The effect of these distortions of physical reality are the basis of the film's ability to communicate. For what is seen is a result of the artist's decisions. The "reality" presented is expressive or symbolic and not a direct reproduction. "Symbol is the central component of culture, and the visual symbol is more basic than the verbal."[52]

Visual symbols, like verbal ones, do not mean anything individually. Meaning develops as they are related to one another in forms or patterns. Film meaning emerges as the visual symbols are placed in patterns which have meaning.

A pivotal point in the history of film occurred when Edwin Porter discovered while assembling *The Great Train Robbery* that two strands of story could be intermixed and told simultaneously. The discoveries of editing--a technique perfected by D. W. Griffith a few years after Porter--leads to the creation of a syntax of the cinema--a structure of meaning results. In the silent film there are few examples of the way the juxtaposition of images conveys meaning than in Sergei Eisenstein's classic *Battleship Potemkin*. Through the use of cut after cut the artist has created the image of a world of revolutionary violence. The horror of which is dramatically conveyed in the many cuts of the *Odessa Step* sequence.

Editing creates patterns or rhythms in time which, taken together form symbols. When merged with sound and music the flow of rhythm is a symbolic structure in itself. Such structures can convey

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[52]Cox, p. 265.

analogies to human feeling. Cox relates this to the work of Susanne Langer.

> My point here is the one Susanne Langer makes in *Problems of Art* when she says that 'rationality arises as an elaboration of feeling.' Symbol is a highly compressed fusion of feeling and meaning. And among symbols, mime precedes myth, vision precedes story, the layout of the village space precedes the spinning out of the people's beliefs in epic and saga. We understand theology best when we grasp it as the elaboration of a primal vision.[53]

Film does not remain on this level.

> Like a great novel, the film moves on different levels of meaning. In one sense it is sheer choreography, a ballet with an unusually long *pas de deux*, moving smoothly from ensemble to solo. In another way, it is a commentary on the democratic process, reducing the mystique of the American political experience to its most practical application. In a reverse sense it conveys that mystique--the sense of tradition, of inevitability --in the most memorable terms. No viewer with a feeling for history can watch this film without feeling that he is part of an awesome historic process in which the figures of the mortals who move on the stage are at once pygmies and ten feet tall.[54]

What Tebbel is pointing to is the potential of film to convey images--a pattern of meaning. "Images tend to sum things up. They deal with many segments of our experience from a total point of view."[55] The net result of communicating through film is not isolated bits of information analytically separated from each other, but a structure of meaning that brings the diverse strands together.

> The common denominator in this communication process is not so much content as it is *image*. The style and feel of the media themselves are at least as important as what they 'say.' The real communication is carried by images, bundles of perception we develop as a result of constant exposure.[56]

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[53]*Ibid.*, p. 266.   [54]Tebbel, pp. 16-17.

[55]Fore, *Image and Impact*, p. 10.

[56]*Ibid.*

In the image the symbols and the form interact to provide a message. In this way we can see the bare outlines of the mechanisms by which the motion picture communicates.

F. W. Dillistone has provided a way to see the relationship of the media of images to our task as Christian communicators. Dillistone writes,

> Seeing and Hearing, the Visual Shape and the Tonal Shape, the Image and the Word--these are the communication-pairs through which information is transmitted and received the world over. It is with these that I shall be constantly concerned for not only are they of supreme importance in all processes of human inter-communication but they are also, in the Christian view, of unique importance in the self-revelation and self-communication of God Himself to man.[57]

The Christian has received God's message in the form of the word and scripture. He can also see in Christ the *image* of God's communication with mankind.

> God's Image appeared in human form and men saw Him in a wide variety of visual situations: God's Word was spoken through the events of a human career and man heard Him in a succession of dialectical encounters. These innumerable secondary images and words, each constituting a partial communication of the full-orbed Divine Word, needed to be built up and co-ordinated for further transmission. In large measure the New Testament is the result of this double process.[58]

The Christian community has struggled through the centuries to make that image part of all persons thinking and seeing. That is our task today. "So to present the Image that the neighbour allows it to become *his* image, so to proclaim to Word that the neighbour welcomes

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[57]F. W. Dillistone, *Christianity and Communication* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), p. 25.

[58]*Ibid.*, p. 55.

it as *his* word, this is the communicator's task and glory in every age."[59] The film media--and television--suggest to Dillistone a unique and powerful way of sharing that image.

> But now at length the medium has been discovered by which word and image together can be instantaneously conveyed and reproduced within wider and wider circles of human life. Much has still to be done to improve transmission and to perfect reception, but there is little doubt that ultimately it will be possible for a person in one part of the world to receive both a visual impression and a verbal message from almost any other part of the world. Surely no medium ever yet discovered offers greater possibilities to the Christian evangelist as he seeks to extend the communication of the Image of God in Christ and of the Good News of what God has done in Christ.[60]

The process of film communication and the need to share the images of God's love for us come together in the practical acts of ministry. These may be grouped as edification, education and celebrating.

Education is the process of imparting or developing within the receiver a new set of beliefs or understanding that he can shape his life on. In terms of secular education the film medium is one of the most effective.

> When educators look for ways the mass media can be 'used for education,' they radically misunderstand the situation which already exists. The mass media are now the most successful educational instruments in our society. They consume far more time and attention than formal schooling; they begin at an earlier age and continue to reeducate adults throughout life.[61]

Fore notes five principles the educator may use to determine what media would be useful in an educational setting.

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[59]*Ibid.*, p. 143.   [60]*Ibid.*, p. 129.

[61]Fore, "Communication for Churchmen," p. 72.

1. He will provide variety in the selection of media for communication.
2. He will try to include some event whose purpose is to capture interest.
3. He will arrange the different experiences in the communication event so that the more concrete experiences come before the more abstract.
4. He will try to arrange the media experiences in the communication event so that they support each other and so that each has a specific job to perform.
5. He will try to match the tasks to be accomplished with the appropriate medium or media.[62]

The filmed experience provides a way to break up the classroom setting by providing mediated experiences from settings which might not be accessible to the learner. The experience is marked by a high degree of involvement since the filmed image tends to be "cooler" or more demanding of the participation of the viewer in shaping.

We have already spoken of the ability of the film to utilize concrete images because of its relation to the surface of physical reality.

Not all film experience need be positive to provide conditions for change. Through media which have no explicit Christian concept the questions of existence shine through. This "negative witness" can shape our understanding of man.

There is no explicit doctrine of man in the vast majority of films. But there is certainly a recognizable Christian doctrine of man, which is implicit, which is stated in 'negative witness' and which in just that kind of a statement is far more graphic, far more powerful when converted into positive witness.[63]

Boyd stresses the value of the negative witness in confronting persons anew with the gospel.

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[62]*Ibid.*, pp. 289-290.   [63]Boyd, p. 69.

Often such a 'negative witness,' discerned, interpreted and
changed into positive witness, will do more to confront a non-
Christian with the Gospel than anything else can do. In other
words, non-religious drama (or film, or television, for example)
may convey implicit Christian truth more significantly for some
persons than 'religious' drama could do, for the latter might
only stiffen a non-Christian's initial attitude of indifference,
resentment or downright opposition. New signs of interest in
Christian thought among intellectuals seem to be induced not so
much by theological writing as by plays, music, pictures, novels
and poetry.[64]

Within the functions of education, the film has a place both

in the growth and development of persons and in their introduction

into new ways of seeing meaning and life.

Edification, as we saw earlier, involves the inward message

of the church pointing the Christian to deeper and richer understandings

of himself and the world and God's essential relationship to both.

Film can provide a tool for the discovery of who we are and

what our world is like. It can deepen our appreciation for the parts

of our lives that are often overlooked.

The Christian who is confronted by the image of the gospel

represented to him by the film can see new dimensions to his faith.

More often, in films produced outside the community of faith the

message is of an image of man seeking meaning and integrity in his

world. Such experiences can deepen and enrich our lives.

There is a close relationship between celebration and edifica-

tion. As we look deeply into the structures of reality that support

existence we become awed by it and the natural response is celebration.

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[64]*Ibid.*, p. 67.

As the film explores images of hope and discovers beauty and meaning a visual celebration is stimulated on the screen and in the perceptions of the viewer.

But film can also have a place in the liturgical acts of corporate celebration. Thomas O'Meara puts it in this way.

> Can we not also partially describe liturgy as a medium of communication, recognizing the fullness this implies? The word of God is communicated to us; sacraments are given; through them grace is communicated to us. We commune with each other, we commune with God.[65]

However, O'Meara suggests that our forms are becoming unsuited to our media-saturated age. He proposes,

> Liturgy can be a mutual exchange of creativity by more intense involvement; more and different dialogue--homilies; more use of contemporary media--e.g., slides, pictures, movies, recorded sound, drama dance--to express our encounter with the one basic theme of this liturgy.[66]

We have seen that the Christian cannot avoid involvement with the mass media and with film. Their power and influence surrounds him and demands his attention. Rather than reject the media we have seen that they can be versatile and useful tools in Christian ministry.

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[65]Thomas F. O'Meara, "Liturgy Hot and Cool," *Worship*, XLII:4 (April 1968), 216.

[66]*Ibid.*, p. 219.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Technology has had a startling effect on our society today. It has made possible new devices and new knowledge that has extended the ability of mankind to communicate and to work and to play. But in the process, technology has shaken and disturbed mankind by breaking down old patterns of relationships, making our skills obsolete and calling our values into question. The residents of electropolis are in many ways different persons from pre-electric man.

Many of the institutions that have traditionally served man so well are now experiencing the trauma of adjusting to the new man in the new society. The Church has been no exception. Within its fellowship have been loosed forces which must either be understood and controlled or they will continue to chip at the foundation of the house of faith. Not the least of the forces which challenge the church to cope creatively are the forces stirred by the new communication technologies. The church can ill afford to adopt either a "wait and see" or an attitude of rejection to the new way mankind is experiencing to speak to the world. From the leadership down to the grass roots the church must prepare to use constructively these new technologies.

As we have seen, the professional leadership of the church is experiencing a severe crisis of identity. Confusion reigns amongst clergy and laity as to the proper role and function of the ministry. With no clear-cut image the pastor is ill-equipped to formulate and carry out the practice of ministry. With no guidance from his

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environment he is left adrift with nowhere to determine his effectiveness or build an effective role description.

We have noted that the crisis of clergy identity did not always exist. We looked at four periods of church history which were marked by definite images of the role of the clergy. In each period the clergy performed a wide variety of functions but one or another tended to become dominant and gave the whole of ministry its focus.

Can that still be the case today? We have seen that in the ideas of Seward Hiltner and Allen Moore we may see the shape of a model for understanding the profession that is based on an appreciation of the functions of the pastor. Briefly, there are three perspectives or major groupings of ministerial functions: shepherding or enabling involving pastoral care activities, organizing or developing involving administrative functions, and communicating which involves acts of proclaiming the faith in the world and sustaining the faithful. Every pastor performs functions in each area and the triad of perspectives is not a set of pigeon holes for separating the ministerial acts but a way of seeing ministry from a dynamic and wholistic viewpoint. As ministry is practiced, one perspective or another provides a focus or touchstone from which we may see the nature of the whole field of action. In the perspective the insight of social sciences and theology impinge on the acts of ministry. A function-centered understanding, then, is not only dynamic and configurational but integrative.

Utilizing this model we looked at the process of communication, and the theological imperatives to communicate. These are seen in the

communicating acts of ministry which are activities of proclaiming the gospel message to those outside the faith or initiating education, edifying, or deepening the faith of the members of the church and, acts of celebrating or expressive communication.

Finally we looked at the mass media--and particularly the motion picture to observe our model in action. We saw that the motion picture can be a useful tool to be utilized in all facets of the ministry.

This study points to two major conclusions. First, the communications revolution that engulfs our perceptual lives can be integrated creatively in the work and study of the church. William Fore suggests that this is best accomplished by seeking not to "use" the media but to become involved with it.[1] By constructive involvement we can see their destructive powers minimized.

> The purpose of Christian involvement in communication media is that they become transformed, their demonic potential being converted into redemptive action, to the end that Jesus becomes known and affirmed as the Christ and men become new persons in this knowledge and affirmation.[2]

He goes on to suggest five implications of this involvement.

> First, it requires us to be concerned with all communication and not just 'religious' communication . . .
> Second, involvement requires us to respect the media with which we become involved . . .
> Third, involvement with the world requires communication to adopt a critical stance with regard to everything, in order to point out to persons both within and without the church the

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[1]William F. Fore, "Communications for Churchmen," in B. F. Jackson (ed.) *Communication--Learning for Churchmen* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), p. 90.

[2]*Ibid.*

falsity of those things which dehumanize persons and destroy community . . .

A fourth implication of involvement with the media of communication is that Christian communication must always aim at helping persons respond so that Christian history and witness become part of their history . . .

Fifth, in relating to the media we must discover points of contact. A point of contact is anything in nature or in history which results in an individual's gaining perspective, by standing outside himself so that he grasps the true nature of his own basis for existence.[3]

A second major conclusion is that such involvement with the media can only take place within an understanding of the purpose and function of the ministry of the church. We cannot afford to be uncritical of the media, neither can we afford to be uncritical or unstructured in our understanding of the ministry and the role of the professional clergy.

A function-centered view of ministry offers a dynamic model to help us understand the place of the media in the life and work of the church.

We can move from here to explore more deeply the nature of ministry *and* the nature of the media without losing either the reasons for the church's existence or distorting the place and purpose of the mass media. The task stands before us.

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[3]*Ibid.,* pp. 90, 91, 92, 93.

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